

EDITORIAL BODIES IN ANCIENT ROMAN RHETORICAL CULTURE

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
The School of Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2010

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

The School of Arts and Sciences

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The template of the body—swollen or emaciated, weak or strong, gangly or graceful—forms and informs rhetorical composition and criticism throughout antiquity. Driving this corporeal tendency is the papyrus book-roll, which makes fully palpable the size of a written discourse and allows for the careful scrutiny of its parts and their arrangement. This dissertation focuses on several key episodes when rhetoric’s evaluative corporeal vocabulary becomes explicitly editorial, as demonstrated by representations of “corpus care.” In a bodily idiom, certain ancient writers purport to reveal the time and labor they have spent preparing a text for publication or to demean writers who do not bother with textual polish. These representations participate in larger stylistic debates of their respective days and pertain to the rhetorical negotiation of public standards of aesthetic accountability in the wide wake of the book-roll.

The study starts in fifth and fourth century Athens and by showcasing Isocrates’ “philoponic rhetoric,” a network of terms through which Isocrates draws attention to the exhaustive editorial efforts required to produce his political discourses. From there, the study moves to Rome. Catullus puts forth an “abrasive poetics,” a harsh approach to his own poems and to the rough pages of others that he deems unfit for circulation. The next chapter transitions into the Octavian/Augustan era and to Horace, whose endorsement of the editing file is a statement of authorial principle to which he gives civic charge by appealing to Octavian’s/Augustus’ sensitivities about Roman supremacy in matters military and literary. Lastly, I turn to Ovid, relegated from Rome by Augustus to the outskirts of Roman influence. Across the miles, Ovid sends numerous book-rolls, all of which use dimensions of textuality—most poignantly, editing—to attempt to get their writer recalled to Rome. The study concludes by emphasizing the importance of understanding the papyrus book-roll as a rhetorical medium in and of itself and when represented in ancient writings.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Were it not for my wonderful teachers, I would be neither a *docta puella* nor a doctored one, so I start by gratefully acknowledging their influence:

Mae Smethurst's seminar on Horace's *Odes* made me fall in love with Latin again. I've long admired her invigoratingly no-nonsense style.

Mark Possanza's annotated bibliography on the materiality of Greek and Roman literary culture launched this project. His wit and wisdom have been indispensable.

Gordon Mitchell's zeal to extend beyond his areas of expertise is both a result and cause of his remarkable intellectual agility. Nothing rhetorical is foreign to him.

John Lyne's graduate seminars improved and enlarged my thinking during the formative years of my development into a rhetorician. I will forever cherish his puns, anecdotes, and general delightfulness.

John Poulakos's relationships with his words and his students are special ones. He is a model and marvel of *paideia*, generosity, and audacity.

Additionally, I'm happy to name Nita Krevans, a gracious scholar and email correspondent; she shared with me her unpublished manuscript on authorial arrangement in ancient poetry book-rolls. Carly Woods and I kept up each other's spirits with sporadic Skype sessions, and while I was thinking through the prospectus for this project, Topher Kurfess and I shared many stimulating chats over lemonades bold and syrupy enough to attract hummingbirds. As for institutions, I'd like to recognize both the Provost for funding my project with a pre-doctoral fellowship and the humanities libraries at Tufts and MIT; *mens et manus*, the latter's motto, perfectly suited my method and my subject matter.

With great affection, I acknowledge my family. Some of my earliest education memories include Dad reading “Just-So Stories” and Ma flashing vocabulary cards. Nicole, the sweetest sister, has often asked to read my various grad school writings because she knows how hard I work on them. Due to unforeseen circumstances, I put in the final writing push while visiting my in-laws in Ireland. Beyond anything I deserved, they pampered me, giving me my own workroom, fancy vegetarian meals, and the much-desired seat by the turf fire.

Above all, I place my dear Shaun. He recognizes that *homo rhetoricus* may be a breed apart, but still needs food, sleep, and the occasional bath. In the last 8 weeks of writing, he tended to all my creature comforts and listened intently every time I babbled incoherently about some new discovery I’d made; my exposition of the etymological journey of the word “terse” was decidedly not so. Our partnership promises many and deep laugh lines.

INTRODUCTION – CORPUS CARE

The earliest negotiations of editing, that defining burden of textuality, is one of the rhetorical tradition's lingering untold stories. A serious obstacle to its being told, but one possible to dodge, is a material one: if reliant on ancient rough drafts, it would be doomed from the start. To focus on scrappy pre-writing and its tell-tale insertions and deletions would tie one to transitional texts that, even if extant (a massively big if), had a small chain of reception and thus limited rhetorical impact before being re-used, discarded, or left to mold in some dark, dank place. On the other hand, to base a study of early editing on surviving in-text references and reactions to it opens up textual tidying as a potentially public matter.

A second challenge is the strategic reticence of (most) writers about their textual labors. For example, even within speeches circulated in material form subsequent to oral delivery, orators seem reluctant to showcase their desktop paraphernalia—especially editing tools—since such texts are meant to be reminders of and not reconfigurations of previously delivered speeches people have already heard or heard about. An orator would not, therefore, want to draw attention to any post-delivery, pre-publication¹ touch-ups his speech has received, however many alterations he may have made. Further, that the achievement of high polish has been designated the province of poets rather than something for which orators should perspire since at least Alcidamas' *On the Writers of Written Discourses or On Sophists*, itself written sometime

¹ Throughout this study, “publication” will mean the making public of a piece of writing, a release that separates the item from its writer and puts it into circulation, where, amongst other destinies, it can be copied by others.

during or around the early 4th century BCE, is at once a distancing move that suits orators' pretensions toward spontaneity and a cue to investigate rhetoric's poetic side.

My use of "editing" requires prompt explanation, especially since the word's Latinate origins—highly relevant when working with writings in Latin—are a little at odds with its current usage. The Latin verb *edo*, *edere*, *edidi*, *editus* (from the prefix *ex* (out, away) + the verb *do* (give)) enjoys a variety of meanings, from giving birth, to uttering words, to presenting something for inspection, to displaying it publically, to publishing it.² For my purposes, editing refers to a whole catalogue of preparations one makes for the expulsion, exposure, or exhibition of one's written words (three attitudes toward making writing public), even though ancient Romans do not use *edo*-words in that way. They refer instead to correction, deletion, dragging away, smoothing, and the like, all activities undertaken with a mind toward publication (else, why bother?). What we call "revision"—looking again, in the sense of catching what one may have missed—featured centrally in the editing process in antiquity and, as now, was frequently undertaken collaboratively;³ I consider revision an implicit part of the editing process. Ancient writers of all stripes—though we have less evidence for ancient Greek writers than Roman—relied on a small network of social intimates to look over their drafts and offer corrections, allowing the writer to see the piece anew. As Raymond Starr suggests in his study of the stages

² *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, s.v. *edo* ∧ 2, definitions 2a, 6a, 10a, 12a, 9. The Greek equivalent is *ekdosis* or *diadidonai*, neither of which, obviously, made the journey to English.

³ See Raymond J. Starr, "The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World," *Classical Quarterly* 37.1 (1987): 213-215, and Sean Gurd, "Cicero and Editorial Revision," *Classical Antiquity* 26.1 (2007): 49-80. Gurd enumerates three stages of textual preparation, favoring "revision" as the base word: "(1) a phrase of 'authorial revision,' in which the author reads and corrects his own drafts; (2) a phase of 'editorial revision,' in which the text is submitted to the judgment of other readers, whose advice the author welcomes; and (3) a final phase of 'cultural revision,' in which the work, now beyond the control of the author, is appropriated and reformed in adumbrations, imitations, and re-inscriptions" (50, f.n. 5).

of textual circulation in antiquity, “the testing and revision of a work could go on indefinitely”⁴ before a writer opted to submit his words to the scrutiny of strangers, bearing on the timeliness and relevancy of verbal release.

Coincident with the book-roll-causing consciousness (and oftentimes squeamishness) about preparing a text for close inspection by ears or eyes is the application of the template of the human body as an organizing principle of composition and criticism, a writer acting as his first critic as he revisits and revises what he has recorded before anyone else does. John Poulakos and Steve Whitson tell a just-so story about this somatic impulse: “Once upon a time the human body devised words referring to itself and serving its needs. Like other words, the bodily kind left some mouth and hit some ears and so on and so forth. Once these words went out, body parts, processes, and functions were inserted into language as it circulated from body to body; over time, things outside the body were made in its image.”⁵ The tendency to use body language as a means of critically assessing words has its origins in fifth- and fourth-century BCE Athens, at a time when public verbal arts began to bear witness to a citywide critical consciousness about words and their optimal figurations and functions according to genre. Though, as George Kennedy has argued, “criticism as an instinctive reaction” to artful words “is as old as song,” what arises in Athens at that time are “norms” of expectation tailored to certain kinds of literate activity.⁶

⁴ Starr, “The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World,” 214.

⁵ John Poulakos and Steve Whitson, “Rhetoric Denuded and Redressed: Figs and Figures,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81 (1995): 380-1.

⁶ Kennedy quote from George Kennedy, ed., *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Vol. 1: Classical Criticism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), ix, and quoted in Andrew Ford, *The Origins of Criticism: Literary Culture and Poetic Theory in Classical Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 1; “norms” from Ford, *Origins*, 1.

One can size up many of the assorted poetic judgments Aristophanes issues in his *Frogs* as part of a burgeoning brand of rhetorical criticism marked by, among other things, a collective critical savvy and increased bookishness. For instance, before the *agôn* between the recently departed Euripides and Aeschylus commences, the chorus assures them that the audience will be able to follow every subtlety of their debate; having read the *biblion* (little book-roll)—though they have always been naturally quick on the uptake—Athenian theatre-goers are now sharp and sophisticated (1113-8). Precisely what little book it is that has contributed to their common critical know-how has long puzzled readers of this play—is it an advance copy of *Frogs*? an anthology of Aeschylus’ and Euripides’ plays? a transcription of an actual debate between the poets (which is just chronologically possible)? a(n obviously pre-Aristotelian) treatise on poetics?—but it marks out Athenians as informed enough about poetic arts to be intolerant of plays whose parts are flimsy and underdeveloped.

That Euripides wants to weigh his and Aeschylus’ respective words on a scale if need be foreshadows the bodily emphasis of the adjectives by which he contrasts his style with that of Aeschylus, the most obvious series of which starts at line 937, and shows that Euripides reckons (wrongly) that Athenians will prefer his light poetics. Euripides charges Aeschylus, his poetic forebear, with passing onto him an art (*tên technên*) so swollen from bombast (*oidoûsan hupo kompasmatôn*) and word-heavy (*rhêmatôn epachthôn*) that he set to sucking it in (*ischnana*) and taking away its weight (*to baros apheilon*) by means of small scraps of verse (*epulliois*) and walks all around the place (*peripatois*). Euripides’ aesthetic leanings have a kinaesthetic dimension, too, as his words move about to work off their weight: is this a reference to circulating drafts among others whose editorial feedback will help tighten the text even more? He also feeds poetry bright beets and liquid glibness strained from little book-rolls (*bibliôn*).

Further, Euripides remarks on his “*leptos*” (bright, refined, husked; line 956) poetic standards, an adjective prominent in the verses of the Alexandrian poet Callimachus, later Latinized into “*lepidus*”, and used by Roman writers to signal concern with sophistication, wit, and polish, who demonstrates possession of those qualities, and when.⁷ Euripides’ fondness for the slim and trim in the end makes him the biggest loser; Dionysos opts to bring Aeschylus out of Hades and back up to Athens to assist the city once more. This debate produces the first sparks in a recurring clash between the dainty and the hefty.

The abundant somaticism of Euripides’ critique-made-creed renders *Frogs* a participant in a larger and rhetorical criticism based conceptualization of the spoken and written as bodily. Speech assumes a bodily guise in several verbal domains.⁸ It takes the form of a *logos* “that lives and acts like a true body (*zêi kai toîs pragmasin hepetai kai tois alêthesin aphômoiôtai sômasin*)” in Alcidamas’ *On the Writers* (§28). It emerges “put together (*sunestanaî*) like a living thing (*zôion*) that has a body (*sôma*) of its own, so as to be neither headless (*akephalon*) nor footless (*apoun*), but to have both a middle (*mesa*) and ends (*akra*), drawn together (*gegrammena*) appropriately (*prepont*)” in terms of one another and the whole” in Plato’s *Phaedrus* (264c). It becomes a unit of *lexis* “having a beginning and an end in itself and a size viewable all at once (*eusunopton*)” like “bodies (*tôn sômatôn*) and other living things (*tôn zôôn*)” in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* (3.9.1409a35-b1) and *Poetics* (1451a3-4).⁹ Those Greek precedents for

⁷ For a detailed treatment of *lepidus* in the middle of the first century BCE, see Brian A. Krostenko, *Cicero, Catullus, and the Language of Social Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 64-72 and 94-99.

⁸ And, of course, it also assumes this shape in Isocrates, whom I handle in chapter 1.

⁹ See Richard Graff, “Reading and the ‘Written Style’ in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 31.4: 30, where he considers the implications of this word for readers. I have taken the liberty of combining passages on *eusunopton* from Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* and his *Poetics*. For more on this word, see James Fredal, *Rhetorical Action in Ancient Athens: Persuasive*

conceiving of speech somatically show that thinkers with, for the most part, non-overlapping rhetorical commitments nonetheless came to terms with speech in a similarly material way. Because of its corporeality, this incipient critical vocabulary lends to critics metrics typically used to scrutinize bodies, among them: size, weight, symmetry, balance, beauty, wholeness, and even parentage. Behold the original “anatomy of criticism.”¹⁰

A text is sometimes isolated as a bodily object unto itself, at other times handled as a bodily extension of its producer, and both reactions are species of rhetorical criticism; the former leans toward rhetoric’s aesthetic side, the latter toward rhetoric’s ethical side. More often than not, though, there is considerable overlap between those domains. Where does editing fit in this bodily schema? Certainly the current corporeal editing marks we know, use, or fear—to “cut out the flab,” to add body to “bare bones,” or to “flesh out” what lacks full development—render writing-under-construction a body-under-construction, one required to take pains in preparation for presentation to readers with presumed aesthetic preferences: of concision, of weightiness, of form. Moreover, at the core of those notations lies a concern with attraction and repulsion (a reception worry) that we could construe as rhetorical, but they do not themselves appear in the final version of a text. As I will amply demonstrate, certain ancient writers also employ a kind of editorial body language, not scribbling it in the margins, but using it centrally within their finished¹¹ texts for various rhetorical purposes. This forthcoming study does not lay out a history

Artistry from Solon to Demosthenes (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press, 2006), chapter 1 (“Seeing Ancient Athens”) and “*eusynoptos*” in the book’s index.

¹⁰ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

¹¹ What textual state constitutes finished-ness is a hot topic for the writers on which I will focus, but by the usage of “finished” here I mean the text as it has come down to us (and I concede that even that qualifier is an immense simplification of the matter of textual transmission).

of editing in antiquity but rather inquires into the rhetorical work accomplished by several ancient writers who expose editorial labors or the lack thereof.

I locate editing's place in rhetoric's early tradition by tracing periodic outbreaks of what I call "corpus care", authorial representations of editorial attention paid or denied to a text and that assume a bodily idiom. Corpus, like its Greek counterpart *sôma*, can signify a number of bodies, in whole or in part, for example: the body of a human or non-human animal [1], alive or dead [3]; flesh or plumpness [5]; the structure of a speech [6b]; the trunk of the body [7]; a concrete object [11]; an organized body of people [15], or; a compendium of scientific, literary, or other writings [16].¹² Ancient writers occasionally let those various corpora interlock, as bodies are wont to do. I choose "corpus care" over "soma care" less for its alliterative crunch and more because, with the exception of one chapter, I focus on Roman rhetorical productions, that is, discourse designed to push and pull. Representations of editing periodically emerge amidst larger and often civically-charged debates about public standards of aesthetic accountability. An iteration of this debate appears with particular pertness in mid-first century BCE Rome and spreads out across various "performance genres"¹³—history,¹⁴ oratory,¹⁵ poetry, even

¹² *Oxford Latin Dictionary* s.v. *corpus*. The last definition of corpus requires expansion, as it differs slightly from our own conception of a "body" of work. We call an author's entire *oeuvre* her corpus, whereas, for most of classical antiquity, a corpus was the sum of all the book-rolls (singular and in Latin: *volumen*, *charta*, *liber*, or *libellus*) that made up one single work. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, for example, is a corpus composed of fifteen book-rolls, and he refers to it that way himself in his *Tristia* ("*ter quinque volumina*" (three by five volumes), 3.14.19).

¹³ This term comes from Thomas Habinek, *The Politics of Latin Literature: Writing, Identity and Empire in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 11.

¹⁴ See, for instance: Sallust's long preface to his *Bellum Catilinae*, especially the portion about "*bene scribere*"; Catullus' dedication of his little poetry book to the historiographer Cornelius Nepos, the first to write a full history of Italy, and a "learned" one at that; Cicero's *De Legibus* I, where Atticus is trying to get Quintus Cicero to historicize; and Cicero's *Brutus*, wherein Cicero compliments Atticus' recent and "*brevis*" book-roll on Roman history.

¹⁵ Cicero's *rhetorica*—*De Oratore* (55 BCE), *Brutus* (46), and *Orator* (46)—contain many examples, both diachronic and synchronic.

philosophy¹⁶—whose practitioners work through what it means to look and sound Roman (emphasis on the “-man”) in public and in publication.

I narrow in on poetry, whose thorough “textualization”¹⁷ means that poets often write about writing. That an ancient writer would do so in a bodily way is not altogether surprising. For one, writing, whether poetry or prose, is composed of corporeal entities, like *dactyli* (‘fingers’; from the Greek *daktuloi*), *pedes* (‘feet’; from the Greek *podī*), and *cola* (‘limbs’; from the Greek *kōla*).¹⁸ Once we recognize that *ars* (art) means “skill in joining or combining something” and ties etymologically to *artus*, “limb”,¹⁹ we see that composition is bodily through and through. Two, individual book-rolls of papyrus are themselves broken up and spoken of anatomically: luxury book-rolls come wrapped in a *membrana* (a protective “skin” like our book “jackets”), have a front side called a *frons* (“brow”, “forehead”), cylinder-rolled edges known as *umbilici* (“belly buttons”; Greek “*omphaloi*”), and decorative roller knobs referred to as *cornua* (“horns”).²⁰ As Joseph Farrell emphasizes in an article on the poet Horace’s various corpora, “[t]he ancient book, not unlike its modern counterpart with its ‘spine’, but more obviously so,

¹⁶ Cicero’s *De Finibus* and *De Officiis* evidence a concern with Romanizing Greek philosophical precepts and even key terms, and at *Tusculanae Disputationes* 1.6, Cicero calls his manner of philosophizing “*polite*” (polished).

¹⁷ This term hails from Ford, *Origins*, 155, wherein he traces the materialization of poetry as it morphs from an oral event to a textual one.

¹⁸ Dactyl: a metrical unit of three syllables, the first long and the next two short (- ^ ^), constructed like the three joints of all fingers (except the thumb).

Pes: a metrical unit of four or fewer syllables. A dactyl is thus a kind of foot.

Colon: a metrical unit of five or more syllables typically falling at the start or end of a line or between words.

¹⁹ Definition from Lewis and Short.

²⁰ See Herwig Maehler, “books, Greek and Roman,” in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edition, ed. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Joseph Farrell, “Horace’s Body, Horace’s Books,” in *Classical Constructions*, ed. Heyworth, Fowler, and Harrison (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 184-5; Frederic C. Kenyon, *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), 58-9.

was a collection of body parts.”²¹ Three, the proper management of the physiology of the self is a signal of rhetorical competence during oral delivery that writers textualize, turning their texts into bodies that make all the right moves or making fun of other texts that lack grace and a fine bearing. Four, book-roll users often write their writing bodies into their texts to authorize their words and attain a sort of presence *in absentia*. Carolyn Marvin has argued that though there is a body wriggling behind every literate work, “[a] mark of literate competence is skill in disguising or erasing the contribution of one’s own body to the process of textual production and practice”,²² but many ancient writers offer evidence to the contrary.

How do ancient writers signify care for a corpus? Isocrates, on whose bodily graphography I focus in chapter 1, tells of working over a text again and again to the point of exhaustion, but poets typically refer to utensils for bodily upkeep, a clear equation of textual and human bodies. As I show in chapter 1, Aristophanes mocks Agathon’s omnipresent editorial razors, with which he keeps his poems (and his body, too) smooth and attractive. As I show in subsequent chapters on Catullus, Horace, and Ovid, Roman poets use verbal representations of the pumice (*pumex*)²³ and the file (*lima*). By means and mention of those tools, poets extend the metaphoricity of their body part art; they compose a body and then care for it as such.

As a smoother of rough patches on skin and as a trusty depilatory, pumice stones were a vital part of aesthetic regimens. “The best pumices for the purpose were white, light, dry, spongy, easily crushed, but not sandy”, as Ortha Wilner describes them,²⁴ and removed unwanted strands or stubble from not just human surfaces but textual ones as well. Unruly

²¹ Farrell, “Horace’s Body, Horace’s Books,” 185.

²² Carolyn Marvin, “The Body of the Text: Literacy’s Corporeal Constant,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80.2 (1994): 129.

²³ From time to time, erupting volcanoes belch forth airy bursts of pumice stones that vary in size, color, and porosity; those qualities determine their best use both now and in antiquity.

²⁴ Ortha Wilner, “Roman Beauty Culture,” *The Classical Journal* 27.1 (Oct. 1931): 27.

papyrus edges and, later, bristly parchment pages, required rubbing with pumice stone or pumice dust to smooth them out for writing and for ease of rolling and unrolling during reading and rolling up afterward for storage. Its various bodily uses—on poetic feet, human skin, papyrus sheets, or animal hides—frequently commingle in poetic representations. Moreover, some ancient pumice stone was also used in dentistry;²⁵ its employment in dentures gives grip to the expression “*mordax pumex*” (biting pumice) that Ovid and others use to describe pumice’s toothsome effect on a leg or a page.²⁶

The file, too, has a broad range of utility, being a manicure, carpentry, or stone-working tool depending on context. Horace’s approval of “the labor of the file and delay” (*limae labor et mora*, 291) in his *Ars Poetica* ranks as its most recognized use as an instrument of editing and receives attention in chapter 3. An allusion to the same tool wielded by Pheidias and touted for text seems more seemly than one to hair-removal, and representations of the *lima* sometimes have a control-freak rigidity about them. The file’s presence in publication predates that of pumice. To set the mood for the ensuing debate between Euripides and Aeschylus, the chorus in Aristophanes’ *Frogs* prepares the audience to hear words “*ton asteïon kai katerrinêmenon*” (901-2), urbane and polished or, to really get down to it, city-like and filed-down. Those two qualities reflect on and reinforce one another from Aristophanes onward, and theirs is a relationship regulated by a worry that the pursuit of polish leads one down a slippery slope to either an excessive slickness not to be trusted or an unctuous “hypersophistication”²⁷ not to be respected.

²⁵ Wilner, “Roman Beauty Culture,” 28.

²⁶ *Ars Amatoria* I.505ff (*nec tua mordaci pumice crura teras*, “do not scrap your legs with biting pumice”) and *Epistulae Ex Ponto* I.5.19 of the file (*lima mordacius uti*, “to use the file more bitingly” on a text). See also Martial (*asperoque morsu pumicis aridi*, 8.72.1).

²⁷ Edwin S. Ramage, *Urbanitas: Ancient Sophistication and Refinement* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 67. See 65-67 on “the hyperurbane man”, the so-called “*urbanissimus*”.

To prepare a desirable corpus—whether fleshy or fibrous—requires tools, the patience to ply them, and the verve to handle reactions to the results. Because “[i]t is not always easy to draw the line between legitimate care...and artificial beauty culture”,²⁸ the borderline between appropriate and excessive attentions undergoes frequent rhetorical negotiation: expressed subtly, argued vehemently, suggested wryly. Corpus care participates in cyclical debates about public discourse’s relationship to the bodies that produce it, receive it, and circulate it. In her book *Bodily Arts: Rhetoric and Athletics in Ancient Greece*, Debra Hawhee traces and draws implications about the body-centric vocabulary, training practices, and modes of sociality shared by rhetoric and athletics, but she leaves out the other bodily art to which rhetoric is often, and usually unfavorably, compared: cosmetics.

The *locus classicus* of this cosmetic conception of rhetoric is Socrates’ discussion with the sophist Gorgias’ eager student Polos in the middle segment of Plato’s *Gorgias*. Socrates names *kolakeia* (flattery, 463b) sophistic rhetoric’s central preoccupation and the production of *charitos kai hêdonês* (charm and pleasure, 462c-d) its primary means of control over others. When Polos fails to see the problem with that, Socrates suggests some comparisons, putting sophistic rhetoric in league with, among other types of “sneaky” skills, *tên kômmôtikên* (463b), superficial adornment. The cosmetic mimics the proper care of the body (*tês toû sômatos therapeias*, 464b) and with its “rascally and deceitful and lowly and illiberal ways, it deceives through figures and colors and smoothness and dress, making people tempted by superfluous beauty and forgetful of healthy bodily development” (465b). Rhetorical products aimed at an audience’s capacity for pleasure use the verbal analogues of those means of deception and

²⁸ Wilner, “Roman Beauty Culture,” 26.

distraction. But where does proper care stop and excessive care begin, and why would a word-worker want to advertise the care his text has received?

Care of the corpus, be it human or textual, ranks as something few want to view in progress; the finished product, though, titillates. Ovid notes as much in his treatment of the human corpus in *Ars Amatoria*: “many treatments, ugly in the doing, please once done” (*multaque, dum fiunt, turpia, facta placent*) (3.218).²⁹ The argumentative basis he lays down for his recommendations on human bodily care in the *Ars* provides insight into his parallel emphasis on textual corpus care in his final writings, which I treat in chapter 4. “There was rude simplicity of old,” Ovid allows, “but now golden Rome possesses the vast wealth of the conquered world” (*Ars* 3.113-4). That is, Romans must befit Rome’s new, spiffy, smooth surfaces, made possible by the domination and taxation of scruffy barbaric peoples.³⁰ Book 3 tends to feminine *cultus*, *cultus* in this case being “*corporis cura et ornamentum*” (the care and ornament of the body),³¹ however, Ovid credits Roman women with knowing full well what it takes to look good.³² Indeed, on the topic of body hair maintenance, he chides himself for nearly warning them not to let “a rude goat find his way beneath your arms, or your legs be rough with bristling hairs” (*Quam paene admonui, ne trux caper iret in alas, neve forent duris aspera crura pilis!* III.193-94). Pumice, of course, effaces both offenses. On the other hand, Ovid presents his advice to men in a less matter-of-fact way, indicating he wants to set the matter—shall we say—straight. While recommending men keep their nails neatly trimmed and their head, facial, and nose hair

²⁹ In Book 2 of his *Ars Amatoria*, the *praeceptor amoris* advises his male charges that, in matters amorous as in many others, “*si latet, ars prodest*” (“if hidden, art prevails”) (II.313), but the context of this advice is bodily only insofar as Ovid warns that saying sweet things with one’s words while curling one’s lips in a sneer of disgust will give the game away.

³⁰ Excluding, of course, the Greeks, whom Romans did not deem barbaric.

³¹ *Thesaurus eroticus linguae Latinae*, s.v. *cultus*.

³² “*Scitis* (You know...)” (3.199).

tidy (I.518-20), he cautions them “not to take pleasure in curling your hair with the iron or in scraping your legs with biting pumice” (*nec tua mordaci pumice crura teras*, 505-6). Such corpus care befits lascivious girls and men who seek men (523-4), but not a cultivated and impenetrable aristocrat.

It is not too much of a jump, therefore, to apply Ovid’s admonitions to makers of the kind of textual corpora that rely on the smoothing effects of pumice. A poet who openly polishes must be ready for his masculinity to be challenged—Catullus’ c. 16 contains his reaction to accusations of softness—and to see his smooth verses passed around from lap to lap like a loose woman or a pretty boy released after a long house arrest and now up for anything—Horace’s *Epistles* I.20.1-3 showcases this worry. One of the very definitions of *edo*—to put out—hints at the sexual angle of prettying up a text so that it pleases others.

The imperative to hide verbal labor has long enjoyed status as an essential rhetorical requirement for securing an audience’s *pistis* (trust), appearing, for example, in Book 3 of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*—“therefore, one should compose without drawing attention to it, and not to seem to verbalize artificially but naturally” (*διο δὲ λανθάνειν ποιοῦντας, καὶ μὲ δοκεῖν λέγειν πεπλάσμενός ἀλλὰ πεφুকωτός*, 3.2.1404b.18-9)—and throughout many later *rhetorica*.³³ This advisement can apply to poetics, too; Aristotle advises tragic poets to keep themselves out of their verses (*Poetics* 1460a5-10). If, to return to my four writers and to paraphrase one of them,

³³ Notice the verb form of *poieô*, from whence “poet”, of course, but also showing that rhetors and poets share the “making, doing” vocabulary. For just a sense of how widespread the “hide art” advisement is, here is a partial list of its occurrences: *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.7.10; Cicero’s *Brutus* 37.139, *De Oratore* 2.37.156 and 2.41.177, *Orator* 12.38; Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria* 1.11.3, 2.5.7, 4.1.8-9, among many other places; Longinus’ *Peri Hupsous* 17.1-2, 22.1, 38.3.

artistry should lie hidden by means of its own artistry,³⁴ we might rightly wonder why they leave their editing marks out in the open. I contend that they do not fear—at least, not prohibitively—that exposed editorial language will jeopardize their rhetorical programs, because its very revelation *is* their rhetorical program.

More than mere textual beauticians, Isocrates, Catullus, Horace, and Ovid are proponents and practitioners of a code of conduct that privileges smooth texts achieved by the rubbing out, scratching out, or polishing out of the unattractive and extraneous. Because evoked images of them laboring with various smoothing implements are bound up with their striving after various goals—which I specify in the chapter summaries below—they are (mostly) unperturbed by the resemblance of their tools and techniques to those of lowly manual workers. Their book-rolls are carefully worked out and worked over, and they want readers to know that. Corpus care writers render untenable what Italo Calvino has dubbed “the possibility of innocent reading” by virtue of which one reads along, merrily oblivious to what has gone into the making of a text.³⁵ Isocrates, Catullus, Horace, and Ovid seem desirous for readers to recognize that their texts could be otherwise, that their texts read the way they do because of deliberate choices of inclusion and exclusion. Nothing is there (or not there) due to a lucky accident or unbidden genius.

Chapter Summaries

Because the book-roll and its attendant elements—most significant for my purposes is the word work made possible by an objectification of discourse—were first encountered and explored by Athenians of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, I start the journey then and there

³⁴ The Latin reads “*ars adeo latet arte sua*” (“to such an extent does artistry hide by means of its own artistry”) and appears in the tale of Pygmalion and Galatea in the *Metamorphoses* 10.252. This tale has strong corporeal editing overtones but is out of my purview here.

³⁵ Italo Calvino, *If On a Winter's Night a Traveler*, trans. William Weaver (New York: Harcourt, Inc, 1981), 115.

before heading to first century BCE Rome. At the center of chapter one (“The Polis(h) of Athens”) sits the admittedly weak-voiced Isocrates, who has a problem with dominant trends in Athenian rhetorical pedagogy and practice and submits a corrective in writing rather than attempting to shout over the din of competing voices. He advances his agenda of slow, considered, text-based rhetorical action by means of what I call his “philoponic rhetoric”, *philoponos* meaning “labor-loving.” Through a variety of terms with hard work at their core, Isocrates asserts himself against or in the midst of the book-roll prejudices of two contemporaries—Alcidamas and Plato—who problematize those very terms. Isocrates’ philoponic rhetoric at once purports to improve the current state of Athenian political *logos* and to result in lasting memorials to the *polis* and its people (himself included). His *Panathenaicus* contains the most explicit depiction of his editorial body, which works away despite crippling old age and a sickness that would wipe out someone half his age.

As I showed above, the body figures prominently in ancient Greek discourse analytics. Rhetorical criticism not only retains this corporeality as we move to the Romans, but also seems to feature it even more plentifully and more physiologically. For example, the so-called *auctor* of the rhetorical treatise known as *Rhetorica ad Herennium*—thought to have been composed at around the same time as Cicero’s “*inchoata ac rudia*”³⁶ *De Inventione* (c. 90s or late 80s CE)—uses body talk throughout the fourth book, dedicated to style (*elocutio*). A too eager desire for the low style sucks speech dry, leaving it arid and bloodless (*aridum et exsanguie*) and deserving of the adjective *exilis*: meager, feeble, depleted, emaciated (4.11.16). The *auctor* calls flailing attempts at the middle style “slack” (*dissolutum*) due to its lack of sinews and joints (*sine nervis*

³⁶ “Inchoate and unlearned” is Cicero’s own evaluation of this work of his late teenage years, or so he tells his brother at *De Oratore* 1.2.5. Those two adjectives appear in Catullus, Horace, and Ovid.

et articulus) or “flopping”, since it droops here and there without firmness or virility. It fails “to hold (*tenere*) the audience’s attention (*adtentum auditorem*) because it is too loose (*diffluit*)” to keep a solid grip on it (4.11.16).³⁷ Overdoing the high style is the particular but not exclusive fault of exuberant novices and results in a bloated, swollen (*sufflata*) style that bulges like a tumor: “for just as a tumor often resembles a healthy condition of the body (*ut corporis bonam habitudinem*), so, to those who are inexperienced, turgid (*turget*) and inflated (*inflata*) speech often seems grand (*gravis*)” (4.10.15).³⁸ The *auctor* also relies on body language to explain why he cannot provide a short example of the rhetorical practice of dwelling on a point (*commoratio*): “this commonplace is not isolated from the whole case like some limb (*membrum*), but rather, like blood (*sanguis*), is spread through the whole body of the speech (*per totum corpus orationis*)” (4.45.58).

Corpus care, concentrated around two primary tools—the pumice stone and the file—that make various corpora more presentable, is a facet of that longstanding and yet contextually pronounced critical conceptualization of speech as bodily. It makes little sense in either the Greek or the Roman context to speak of a meandering diaspora of critical corpus language from the realm of oratory to that of poetry; instead this language operates in both places at the same time, across time. In Rome, we see it in Cicero and Catullus, as well as in Quintilian and Martial, the latter two of whom fall outside the purview of this project in its current form.

In chapter two (“Rubbed the Right Way: The Pleasures of Abrasive Poetics in Catullus”), I move into the late Republican period and set the scene by briefly comparing the views of

³⁷ Attention—demanding it, competing for it, holding it—is nothing new for rhetoric, however different the media in our time. See Richard Lanham, *The Economics of Attention: Style and Substance in the Age of Information* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

³⁸ In his first-century CE *Peri Hupsous*, Longinus asserts that swellings (*onkoi*) are just as nasty in *logoi* as in bodies (*sômatôn*, §3); this is an oncology best practiced by rhetoricians.

Cicero and Catullus (84 – c. 54 BCE) on the polish resultant from writerly rigor. Even before Cicero did, Catullus withdrew from public service, off-put by abuses of power and disinterested in toadying to the first triumvirate. This attitude of intolerance pervades his only surviving poetic collection. In it, Catullus puts forth what I call his “abrasive poetics”, a harsh approach to his own poems and to the rough pages of others that he deems unfit for anything but wrapping or toilet paper. Catullus mixes beauty and cruelty to appeal to readers with a fondness for refined wit, and one of his poems contains what could be the most penetrating response to reader criticism in all of Roman poetry (c. 16). Catullus advocates the literal pumicing of the book-roll and the figurative pumicing of its contents, recognizing all the while that tending to his corpus in that way makes him a target of affronts to his manhood. It also potentially renders his poems rhetorically irrelevant, as thoroughly polishing a text takes no little time. However long Catullus does spend on corpus care, he plays with the language of time within his poems to give his editorial treatments recency and reader-directedness.

Chapter three (“The Horace File”) transitions into the Octavian/Augustan period and one of its premier poetic personages, Horace (65 – 8 BCE). Not a fan of the pumice, which he equates with the prostitution of one’s book-roll (*Epistulae* 1.20), Horace favors the file. On the basis of his *Sermones*, *Epistulae*, and *Ars Poetica*, I argue that his endorsement of the *lima* is a statement of authorial preference and principle that he endows with civic significance by appealing to Octavian/Augustus’ sensitivities about Roman supremacy. For example, Horace frames filed literature as a much-needed counterpart to Roman military dominance and appeals to the shelves of Augustus’ new Palatine library, which ought to be filled with works worthy of Rome’s standing in the world. Most striking about Horace is his extreme distaste for the masses and his abhorrence at the craze for poetry-writing that has captured the Roman upper-class. One

aspect of his poetic project is an attempt to inject soundmindedness into Roman literature, dispelling the myth of the inspired poet and expelling the notion that any dope can write poetry.

The final chapter (“Roughing It, Repeatedly: Ovid’s Exilic *Epexergasia*”) dwells on Ovid (43 BCE – 17CE), abruptly relegated³⁹ from Rome in 8 BC due to an unspecified “poem and error.” Many readers, and even Ovid himself, have noted the repetitive strains of lament and complaint in his exilic works *Tristia* and *Epistulae Ex Ponto*, and I hone in on the iterations of attention Ovid affords to editing and how they fit into his efforts to be recalled in if not to Rome. First, across those two poetic corpora, Ovid uses the frames of unsuitability and inability to explain why his exilic works go without what were in his happier days *de rigueur* textual treatments. Smooth texts would not befit an exile to an uncouth barbaric land (*Tristia*), and it is increasingly difficult to put his shriveling body under the stress of hard editorial labor (*Epistulae Ex Ponto*). He seizes goodwill first, then pity. Second, he attempts to edit his massive corpus *Metamorphoses* from afar, claiming it was left unedited due to his sudden expulsion from his homeland. He relies on friends who are still loyal to him to assist him in this task, and it is to his appeals to his friends that I focus on last. The rhetorical motion of several of Ovid’s letters turn on his recollection of the sociality of editing, a facet of textual production that allows him to show he does not bare sole responsibility for any poetic offenses he may have committed, emphasize his loneliness in exile, and remind addressees of their former intimacy. I name his repetitive emphasis on editing “exilic *epexergasia*”, which has an Isocratean philoponic rhetorical term at its base. The word first appears as a rhetorical figure in Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria*, wherein he defines it as working out a point thoroughly and then some.

³⁹ A form of banishment less severe than exile in that the relegated person maintains his citizenship and financial assets, though Ovid toggles between calling himself a *relegatus* and an *exul*.

CHAPTER 1 – THE POLIS(H) OF ATHENS

Editing's first and fully public presence was not on a page, but on a stage, *the* stage: the Theatre of Dionysos. Though it would be several years before the kind of terminology we quickly recognize as editorial—words, as Richard Lattimore puts it, “for such stages and processes as successive drafts, revision, editing, etc.”¹—would appear in Greek, in 411 BCE, Aristophanes showcases the activities of one of Athens' most well-known poets, Agathon, in a way that suggests editing. In the opening scene of *Thesmophoriazusae*, Euripides seeks out Agathon, wanting this young fellow tragedian to dress up as a woman and infiltrate the women's secret fertility celebration (the annual Thesmophoria), during which Euripides suspects they will scheme to kill him for insulting them with his portrayals of women (182-3). Euripides prevails upon Agathon's slave to interrupt his master, versifying in the near-holy silence of his workshop (25ff). What we first learn about Agathon's way with words comes not from an Agathon-masked actor demonstrating them, but from his slave's verbal depiction of them. The poet, his slave describes, “turns words” (*torneuei...epôn*), “gums” them together (*kollomelei*), and “smooths them out in wax” before “casting them into metal” (*kêprochutei goggullei kai choaneuei*) (52ff).

This active mish-mash might not immediately register as editorial nor seem to pertain to writing except through the bend and stretch of metaphor. Because in the 5th century BCE writing was a relatively new technology, its lexicon was not disambiguated from that of the plastic arts;

¹ Richard Lattimore, “The Composition of the *History* of Herodotus,” *Classical Philology* 53.1 (January 1958): 20, f.n. 18.

graphô, for instance, bears the mark of this ambiguity and can mean scratch, scrape, represent, draw, paint, or write, and *torneuô* refers to working an object with a lathe or chisel until smooth and shapely.² We could very well surrender to the charm of this vocabulary overlap and leave it at that, but the editorial meanings of those processes click when we consider their literal side.

By using a form of the verb for gluing (*kollaô*; also “welding”), Aristophanes draws our attention to the messy materiality of the graphic process; writers would glue papyrus patches atop errors to hide them or to insert emendations on top of them, or they would simply cut out the offending section altogether. Even in our (omni)present e-modality, we retain a vestige of the physicality of re-arranging in our comparatively tidy “cut and paste” function. (Our “scroll up” and “scroll down” parlance also has ancient origins, although the ancients scrolled from side to side.) “Turning words” could thus point to synthesizing scraps and segments in an effort to capture a smooth order one can seal together with some glue. That Agathon works in wax before metal seems a clear analogy to the sculptor’s method of first modeling a figure in a cheap and pliable medium before moving to one expensive and unforgiving. But the wax could refer to a wax tablet, which was less costly than papyrus and more appropriate for the destructive stages of sorting and slashing through one’s words over and over. Moreover, comparing papyrus to metal becomes a favorite trope of later editing-advocating writers.³ Through this crafty description, Aristophanes represents Agathon’s poetic process as driven by the “fabrication, elaboration, adaptation, and linking of ‘materials,’ and which is far from the idea of a creative work that flows mysteriously and obscurely from the mind of the genius,” as Gian Franco Nieddu sees it.⁴

² Liddell and Scott, s.v. *graphô* and *torneuô*.

³ See, for example, Horace *Odes* 3.30.

⁴ Gian Franco Nieddu, “A Poet at Work: The Parody of *Helen* in the *Thesmophoriazusae*,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 44 (2004): 334, f.n. 11.

The doubling capacity of the verbs Aristophanes chose permits him to indulge his love of wordplay, to tap into writers' unsettled artistic identity, and to distinguish Agathon as no slouch.

Indeed, Aristophanes does more than mark out Agathon as unafraid to work at improving the look of his verses. Aristophanes' Agathon proudly espouses the belief that, because poems of necessity resemble the nature of their poets (167), "it's bad form (*amouson*, literally "without the Muses") for a poet to look coarse and shaggy (*agreîon onta kai dasun*)" (160). He names the poet Phrynichus⁵ as the embodiment of this principle, praising the cares he took to refine himself (*te kalos hên kai kalôs êmpescheto*) as the source of his refined dramatic pieces (*kal' hên ta dramata*)(165-7). When Agathon's interlocutor plays along, pretending to find this assessment truly revelatory, Agathon, missing or ignoring the sarcasm, enthusiastically agrees, crediting his understanding of the relationship between the state of his body and that of his verses for why he takes such good care of himself (*emauton etherapeusa*, 171).

What in particular recommends Agathon for the office Euripides' needs to be filled? "I am gray-haired and bearded," Euripides stresses, whereas "you appear pretty-faced, freshly scrubbed and shaved, lady-voiced, tender, and good-looking" (*euprosôpos leukos exurêmenos gunaikophônos hapalos euprepês ideîn*, 191-2). When Agathon refuses to leave his poetic workshop, Euripides convinces another fellow (Mnesilochus) to shave his body hair, asking Agathon if he can borrow one of those razors he always has near by (217-8). This marks the beginning of "gender trouble", to use Judith Butler's famous phrase, in editorial poetics.⁶

While orators typically receive credit for pioneering the link between a person's ways and his words—"ut vita sic oratione" being its simplest expression ("as one lives, so one

⁵ A poetic rival of Aristophanes who is also mentioned at line 13 of *Frogs*.

⁶ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

speaks”; Cicero *Brutus* §117)⁷ but present also in Isocrates (“*logos alêthês kai nomimos kai dikaios psuchês agathês kai pistês eidôlon estin*,” *Nicocles* §7)—it first gains expression as a pun on Agathon’s name, as “*agathos*” can mean morally good, of good quality, or good-looking. Euripides also credits Agathon with being well able to articulate much in a short form because he cuts and shapes his words (*suntemnein*, 177-8); his fondness for razors applies to more than his own body. In thus underhandedly punning on two meanings of *sôma*—in this case, the human body and a material text—Aristophanes inaugurates what becomes yet another feature of the rhetorical tradition: the tendency to treat discourse as a body.

Agathon’s editorial efforts, represented in his slave’s account, are representative of his bodily preening, his bodily preening of his character. Turning to another Aristophanic mention of Agathon adds a nudge to the wink in *Thesmophoriazusae*. In the *Frogs* (405 BCE), Dionysos pines for Athens’ recent loss of Sophocles, Euripides, and Aeschylus, framing their absence in terms of the *polis*. But when asked about Agathon, also recently deceased, he says, “a good poet (*agathos poiêtês*) and much missed by his friends” (83), that is, the loss is a personal one rather than a political one. Punning again on Agathon’s name, Aristophanes separates the good from the best. Agathon’s assorted types of somatic dandyism have their critics. Although all of Agathon’s plays have been lost (for now, at least), it seems safe to presume he did not insert himself and his trusty razor into them; the results of his editing would be on show in his verses, but the process itself would not be documented there.

⁷ For instance, Cicero’s *Tusculanae Disputationes* V.47: “*qualis autem homo ipse esset, talem eius esse orationem; orationi autem facta similia, factis vitam*”; Cicero’s *Brutus* 132: “*non vita solem sed orationis etiam*”; Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria* XI.1.30: “*Profert enim mores plerumque oratio et animi secreta detegit. Nec sine causa Graeci prodiderent, ut vivat, quemque etiam dicere*”; Seneca *Ep. Mor.* 114.1: “*talis hominibus fuit oratio qualis vita.*”

Oddly enough, the writing *rhêtor* Isocrates provides our first autobiographical glimpse at an editorial body, guiding our gaze as he sees fit. Several writing-based concerns in his substantial corpus adumbrate those in Catullus, Horace, and Ovid, scrupulous editing above all. Underlining Isocrates' efforts is what I call "philoponic rhetoric", a pose through which he discloses the care and time he has lavished on a *logos* from its conception, to its composition, through its revision, to its publication. A network of terms⁸ in Isocrates' corpus⁹ signals his unmistakable determination to keep writing, editing, and publishing, through taunts, fatigue, old age, even severe illness.¹⁰ His philoponic rhetoric speaks to the qualities his highly finished work offers his polity: in his time, the benefit of advisory words born of extensive reflection and revision; after his time, the benefit of a record of the kind of artistry his *polis* inspired and even honored.¹¹ Philoponic rhetoric reemerges in a variety of Roman verbal arts. Its reincarnation in the corpora of Catullus, Horace, and Ovid takes form in words like "*labor*" (labor) and "*opus*" (work) that denote ideal poetic processes and products rounded out by pumicing and filing. Associating, as he does, a greater use of editorial tools with the greater glory of Rome, Horace in particular highlights the civic aspect of his word-works, as I demonstrate in chapter 3.

In this chapter, I first put Isocrates' philoponic rhetoric in context by highlighting two other accounts of graphic rhetoric from around the early fourth century BCE, those of Alcidas

⁸ See Table 1. Because this is only a chapter about Isocrates and not an entire dissertation, the most elegant way to present my terminological findings is with a chart and a declaration of the vaguely anti-rhetorical rhetorical *topos* to "take my word for it" that these words occur at important places in the corresponding texts' arguments; it would be positively positivistic of me to do otherwise.

⁹ For an excellent treatment of Isocrates' textual corpus, see Yun Lee Too, *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates: Text, Power, Pedagogy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), chapter 1 and 2, especially 66.

¹⁰ Isocrates is too gentlemanly to name his ailment; see *Panathenaicus* §267.

¹¹ How much praise Isocrates received in his own time is unclear and made no clearer either way by the teasing of his contemporaries.

TERM	<i>Panath.</i>	<i>Paneg.</i>	<i>Antidosis</i>	<i>Evagoras</i>	<i>Helen</i>	TOTAL
<i>philoponos</i> (work-loving)	260, 267	Ø	Ø	73	57	4
<i>ponos</i> (work)	3, 11, 27, 232, 247 (of reading I), 268?, 270	1, 186	(phil. training) 184, 189, 200, 210, 265, 289, 305	78 (crediting Nicocles)	Ø	16/17
<i>chalepos</i> (<i>hard to do, difficult</i>)	36, 246 (of reading I)	74, 82	51, 81, 83	8	11, 13	10
<i>ou/mê</i> <i>rathûmeô</i> (not stop work, not be lazy)	Ø	3	Ø	75	Ø	2
<i>exergazomai</i> (bring a work/deed* to completion, finish it off, perfect)	Ø	10	83, 201 (approach to learning)	4, 73	Ø	5
<i>diatribô</i> (rub apart, spend a lot of time on, elaborate)	6, 262	14	4, 6, 30, 206	78 (credits Nicocles)	negative use only	8
<i>diorthoô</i> (set straight, amend)	262	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø	1
<i>prographô</i> (add in writing, amend, append)	262 (only use in whole corpus)	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø	1
<i>apakribôomai</i> (to be highly finished)	Ø	11	190, 264 (negative)	Ø	Ø	3
<i>akribês</i> (exact, precise)	36, 39, 85, 246 (of reading I)	11, 63	202, 204, 279 (philosopher's appreciation for <i>eunoia</i>)	42 (of E), 73	negative use only	11
<i>technikôs</i> (artistic)	271	48	205, 206 (I's pupils)	73	Ø	5
<i>diadidonai</i> (pass around, distribute, publish)	4, 233, 262	Ø	87, 193	74	Ø	6

TABLE 1. ISOCRATES' PHILOPONIC RHETORIC

**Ergon* (work, deed) is also a philoponic word; it occurs many times.

and Plato. Given their reactions to meticulous editing in particular, Isocrates' repeated representations of revision in the latter sections of his lengthy *Panathenaicus* merit analysis. Having by far the most explicit of all the instances of philoponic rhetoric, this text pushes it to the limits of its already limited respectability. What is Isocrates up to?

Next, because in Isocrates' time writing was still a relatively new *technê* and technology, its lexicon was not disambiguated from that of the plastic arts, as I showed above with *graphô*. This makes for strategic comparison and contrast between the verbal and the visual for all manner of ancient wordsmiths. For his part, Isocrates both exploits writing's nascent vocabulary to situate himself among the premiere craftsmen of Hellas and enjoys the unique possibilities of writing (e.g., its mobility) that make him their superior. Besides his contribution to political matters in his own time, Isocrates sees himself as contributing to the future ideological pull of the Athenian *polis*-scape, and not by dotting it with reliefs of battles or with statues of tyrant-killers, but by stamping images of these events and people—oh, and himself, too—onto the imagination of successive generations of readers. As much as Alcidamas and Plato object to the encroachment of the book-roll and all such a medium entails (e.g., slow thinking, editing, communicative distance), they too “[s]culpt, file, chisel, / (and) let [their] floating dream / be sealed / in the resistant block” of the page, to alter some choice lines from the 19th century proto-Parnassian poet, Théophile Gautier.¹²

I close the chapter by arguing that the Isocratean textual traits of slow and statuesque writing become *topoi* in Roman poetry. The Greek treatment of editorial bodies in many ways resembles the Roman one, suggesting that ancient writers' love-hate relationship with the book-

¹² The last stanza of “L'ART”, the last poem in Gautier's 1858 poetry book *Émaux et Camées*: “Sculpte, lime, cisele; / que ton rêve flottant / se scelle / dans le bloc résistant!” Though Gautier popularized the motto “*art pour l'art*”, I do not mean to associate Isocrates with that approach.

roll does not ease with time and may even intensify with its use in the Roman world. Fourth century BCE Athenian writings showcase the first expressions of those anxieties, especially acute about editing.

1.1 TEXT WORKERS

Isocrates comes of age—old age, really—amidst a book-roll panic in Athens, and he has yet, even today, to fully and widely convince fellow rhetoricians that his kind of graphic rhetoric was as useful to his *polis* as, let alone *more* useful than, the phonic rhetoric of others.¹³ His writings too often suffer the indignity of being categorized as *ars gratia artificis*, art for the sake of the artificer. That is far from how Isocrates presents himself, though, and he self-discloses in a manner that serves his rhetorical project to improve the state of Athenian *logos*. Recent efforts to give rhetorical respectability to his graphomania have taken advantage of—but not, I think, *full* advantage of—his own carefully crafted self-consciousness about it.

For example, in her book *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates*, Yun Lee Too considers his frequent claims to be a micro-voiced milquetoast a strategic means of recommending himself above and against the bickering loudmouths and shameless sycophants who are coming to dominate Athens' rhetorical spaces. She names his small man stance “the politics of the small voice.”¹⁴ Its corollary is the politics of the big pen, which Isocrates adopts “in his own write”, as Too puns.¹⁵ Writing *logoi politikoi* permits Isocrates, no young buck, to continue to wield

¹³ For background on Isocrates' 19-20th century reception, see the respective introductory chapters of Ekaterina Haskins, *Logos and Power in Isocrates and Aristotle* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004) and Takis Poulakos, *Speaking for the Polis: Isocrates' Rhetorical Education* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997).

¹⁴ See Too, *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates*, ch. 3. Places where Isocrates mentions these characteristics include *To Philip* §81, *Epistle* 8.7, and *Panathenaicus* §9-10.

¹⁵ Too, *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates*, ch. 4.

political influence and to “legitimise his civic identity” in Athens and “beyond the limits of his own city”¹⁶, since even the weakest writing—which his is not, Isocrates pleads—can travel further than the strongest voice. By means of richly textured tactics, he promotes pan-Hellenism while positioning Athens as the union’s rightful *hêgemôn* (guide, leader, harmonizer), and he works within Athenian democratic rhetorical mores to establish himself as the *polis*’ true *hêgemôn*.¹⁷ Further, Takis Poulakos, in his book *Speaking for the Polis*, stresses the connection Isocrates makes between *eu legein* (using language well) and *eu phronein* (using one’s head well) and champions Isocrates’ liberation of *polis*-implicating discourse from the topical constraints of private disputes, the “debate protocols” of the assembly, and the chronological demands of the water-clock.¹⁸ Isocrates works to enlarge his fellow citizens’ notions of what counts as political discourse so that they will not only welcome his written meditations on “issues of national importance and public consequence”¹⁹ as political, but also come to uphold them as the preeminent mode of “speaking for the *polis*.”

Through his philoponic rhetoric, Isocrates induces readers to believe he is not messing around or casually scribbling, but is engaged in a sort of serious, intense rhetorical activity in which he is peerless. Though of course phonic rhetors knew from bitter experience that the *hoi polloi* did not like feeling outfoxed by an elite speaker highly trained in the art of rhetoric,²⁰ hiding effort does not become an official rhetorical directive until later; Isocrates does not labor to hide his labor. Also, the connection others before and contemporary to him make between writing and play—Gorgias at the end of his *Encomium of Helen* (*grapsai ... paignion*, §21),

¹⁶ Too, *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates*, 150.

¹⁷ Too, *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates*, 6 and 150.

¹⁸ T. Poulakos, *Speaking for the Polis*, 69-70.

¹⁹ T. Poulakos, *Speaking for the Polis*, 69.

²⁰ See Josiah Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

Alcidamas at the end of his *On Writers* (*toû de graphein en paidiâi kai parergôs epimelomenos eû proneîn kritein para toîs eû pronôusin*, §35), and Plato's Socrates at the end of the *Phaedrus* (276c-e, 277e, 278a-b)—necessitates Isocrates, first, show he is not goofing off and, second, prove he is not foolish to invest himself so fully in graphic over phonic rhetoric.

Various and more or less contemporary attitudes toward most of his philoponic rhetorical terms constitute a serious challenge for Isocrates: his rivals Alcidamas and Plato endow them with, at best, a cautionary cast. Even Isocrates himself does not invariably present each term as a virtue, except *ponos* and *philoponos*, which are always good. The chronological matter of whether he attempts to one-up Alcidamas and Plato or they him remains knotty beyond straightening, but it is likely that writing worries were generally in the air at this time. Though signs point to Isocrates having been a logographer in his younger days, the scope of that activity—small-scale agonistic topics and spaces—no longer appeals to him in his dotage. Isocrates proposes a new rhetorical genre and a new *rhêtor*, himself the archetype, whose foremost concern is “broad and worthy” (*Antidosis* §80) cultural matters loftily considered.²¹ The drawback to t/his grand introduction is that Athenians are not well able to tell one kind of word-doer (*logopoios*, a word Isocrates disdains²²) from another, as John Poulakos maintains.²³ Therefore, Isocrates' frequent claims to be doing something different, claims he substantiates with terms that fluctuate from superlative to objectionable, seem to have little promise as a means of persuasion.

²¹ See Takis Poulakos *Speaking for the Polis*, especially chapters 4 and 5.

²² See Too, *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates*, 118-119, for citations. Alcidamas uses it dismissively in §8.

²³ John Poulakos, *Sophistical Rhetoric in Classical Greece* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 127.

GETTING A GRIP ON *KAIROS* (ALCIDAMAS)

Alert to the logical inconsistency (*alogon*, §29) at its nib, in his early 4th century BCE assault *On the Writers of Written Discourses or On Sophists*, the rhetor Alcidamas pens a counter-statement to a mania he sees gripping the rhetorical community of Athens: a mania for slowly and poetically writing one's way through situations demanding a nimble oral response. After asserting that intensively and life-long writing rhetors can more aptly be called poets than sophists (*poiêtas ê sophistas*, §2), Alcidamas estimates that even those formally untrained in words and their ways can produce something worth saying (and hearing and reading) if permitted to scratch away for a long time (*pollôi chronôi graphai*), correct at leisure (*kata scholên epanorthôsai*), refer to various sources, compose some more, correct again (*epanorthôsasthai*) based on the advice of trusted pre-readers, and to clean up (*anakathêrai*) and write over (*metagraphai*) yet more after repeated inspection (*episkephamenon*) (§4).²⁴ Poets and other bookish types may have a surfeit of time during which to produce and preen words, but orators—if they truly merit that name and its political significations—speak entirely from positions of deficiency. To rhetorically intervene in urgent matters, despite a shortage of preparation time (*chronos*), situational awareness, and secure foreknowledge of an audience's temperament and the opposition's arguments and rejoinders (§21-25), one must fearlessly grab hold of the forelock of fleeting *Kairos* and hang on for the ride.²⁵

²⁴ In Aristophanes' *Knights*, Cleon snipes something similar to the sausage-seller (340ff).

²⁵ *Kairos* (capital 'k') is the embodiment of that quickly setting horizon of time to act or react before it's too late. Debra Hawhee defines *kairos* as a "bodily opening" or time for "instantaneous response" (75; cf. 66ff). Hawhee also recounts what *Kairos* looked like in visual art representations (72) and cites Lysippos' ekphrastic fragment (from his *Anth. Pal.* 16.275.7) about his encounter with such a representation, from which I quote here in part:

“Lysippos: Why does your hair grow over your face?

Kairos: For one who encounters me to grasp.

Alcidamas' objection to the polished precision (*akribeia*)²⁶ with which writers outfit their words for the assembly, courtroom, and even private conversation (§9), is its inability to bend and flex in response to the shifting nature of communicative interaction. Graphic rhetors write, edit, and memorize their writing as if they are the only ones communicating; their pen is a head with an almighty mouth and no ears. This deafness can be more than an artistic or interpersonal problem if life hangs in the balance, as it often does in courtroom speeches about accused capital offenders or assembly debates about war. Extemporaneous speakers are always on-call, ready to react at a moment's notice "whenever there is need to advise the mistaken, to console the unfortunate, to soothe the provoked, [or] to refute sudden allegations of blame" (§10). Kairotic rhetoric speedily serves corrective and philanthropic functions, ones vital to sustaining communal order and sociality.

For this reason, Alcidamas does not let up on graphic rhetors: "for whenever someone habituated to working words thoroughly little by little and to putting phrases together with exactitude and rhythm" (*hotan gar tis ethisthêi kata mikron **exergazesthai** tous logous kai met' **akribeias** kai rhuthmou ta rhêmata suntithenai*—notice the philoponic rhetorical terms) must get his thoughts moving quickly (*bradeiai...tês dianoiâs...kinêsei*), he bumbles, and not in a way that endears him to an audience suspicious of faultlessness, but in a way that marks him as inept. Further, no more vocally able than those with untrained, weak pipes (*tôn ischnophônôn*), he twitters out words that are neither lithe nor of any aid to others (*hugrôs, philanthrôpôs*, §16; see

L: God! Why does it become bald behind?

K: For once my winged feet pass by, even if desiring so, no one can grasp me from behind" (73).

See Debra Hawhee, *Bodily Arts: Rhetoric and Athletics in Ancient Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

²⁶ See Graff's "Reading and the 'Written Style' in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*" for an analysis of how Aristotle's treatment of writing in *Rhetoric* 3 uses *akribeia*.

also §26). The philanthropic dimension of rhetoric also has an aesthetic aspect, a kinaesthetic aspect, really, because *logoi* that emerge immediately (*parautika*) resemble true bodies (*alêthesin...sômasin*) in their soulfulness (*empsochos*), liveliness (*zêi*), and ability to act (*tois pragmasin*), whereas written *logoi* on the whole lack that sinewy quality of *energeia* (activity-in-motion, §28). Here we see *ergon* affixed with a *kairos*-slanted eulogistic prefix; whereas Isocrates favors *ex-*,²⁷ Alcidamas favors *en-*. The difference is that painstaking writers do their rhetorical work entirely outside (*ex-*) the moment of communicative encounter, while spry kairotic speakers do their rhetorical work in (*en-*) the moment. The one works the papyrus, the other the clock.

In emphasizing the comparative fitness that keeping a good grip on *kairos* demands, Alcidamas employs several body-based analogies. Faced with little time to prepare their words, habitually extemporaneous speakers are to heavy-lifters as logographers are to weaklings (§7); the former are to speedy runners and on-target javelin-throwers and archers as the latter are to winded foot-draggers and short-of-target launchers of pointy objects (§7); and the former are to wholly footloose and free bodies as the latter are to wobbly bodies just unfettered after long confinement (§17). How far is Alcidamas reaching with those extended athletic analogies? As

²⁷ For instance, see Isocrates *Panegyricus* §10: “And I advance [the position] that the philosophy of *logoi* and other *technai*, too, receive the most benefit if we admire and honor not those at the first beginnings of their work (*tous prôtous tôn ergôn archomenous*), but those who are the most virtuosic perfecters (*tous aristh’...exergazomenous*) of each (art), and not those who seek to speak about formerly unspoken things, but those with the know-how (*outôs epistamenous*) to speak as no one else is able.” *Ergon* (work) is what young and inexperienced rhetors do, and one might call what they do “issuing ejaculatory outbursts.” *Ex + ergon* (thorough work) is what older and wiser rhetors do, and one might call this “issuing refined guidance.” We find another variation on the *ergon* theme in the frisky introduction to Isocrates’ handling of *Helen* (§2). Here Isocrates blasts the new sophists for encouraging in their students not the bare minimum of *ergon*, though that too would not pass his muster, but the vice of *periergia*, which means over-exactness in any pursuit,²⁷ and, especially, over-doing it when “it” means an encomium to bumblebees, salt, or some other paltry topic in which a new sophist encourages interest. I dwell on a form of *exergia* as a corpus care concept in chapter 4.

Robert Hariman recognizes of body language deployed in public argument, “the body active in political life is a body serving as a field of figuration.”²⁸ Besides being culturally appropriate, Alcidas’ bodies likely also point to an increasingly visible divergence of somatic (stereo)types between the public speaker and the private writer; the one training and exerting himself in open discourse venues like the gymnasium and the Assembly, the other cramping himself under a desk, his posture increasingly hunched, his limbs increasingly spindly.²⁹ Editorial bodies are slight, and slighted.

This bodily difference shows up in a transmuted form in Cicero’s reception of classical Athenian luminaries. In *Brutus*, Cicero finds merit in Isocrates beyond his unequalled application of rhythm to prose, also calling him “a mighty orator and ideal teacher” (*magnus orator et perfectus magister*), but Cicero adds this intriguing qualification: “although he kept away from the light of the forum” (*quamquam forensi luce caruit*, viii.32). This verb of withdrawal (*careo*) can describe a willful choice or a reasoned acceptance of necessity.³⁰ *Lux* (light), too, is fruitfully ambiguous, as it could mean the limelight of the forum—that is, the publicity to be had and glory to be won from open-air rhetorical contests—or simply the sunny outdoors.³¹ Or this *lux* could just as well contrast with another source of illumination that shines on rhetorical

²⁸ Robert Hariman, “Prudence/Performance,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 21.2 (Spring 1991): 35.

²⁹ There are also a lot of gender-related tensions here, too, as only women keep indoors.

³⁰ Recall that Isocrates tells us his voice was wispy and confidence shaky, and that Too situates those self-disclosures in their political context.

³¹ Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria* 10.5.17 about the risks of orators staying indoors too long reading literature: “there is always the danger that, owing to the seclusion in which they have almost grown old, they will shrink in terror from the real perils of public life, like men dazzled by the unfamiliar sunlight (*solem*)” (Loeb trans.).

activity: brightly burning oil lamps by whose light writers continue their work after nightfall. Isocrates' legacy is thus more literary than locative.³²

Places, though, had a magical draw for later admirers of Athenian intellectuals.³³ Written shortly after *Brutus* and *Orator*, Cicero's *De Finibus* contains a brief account of what we would now call his "*peregrinatio academica*", a sort of scholarly walk-about undertaken by a wealthy Roman student when he arrived in Athens to round off his rhetorical and philosophical education. Sometimes young Romans undertook a group jaunt to the haunts of Athens' finest, making it a highly social and even emotional event. One of Cicero's fellow amblers, Piso, needs a moment to collect himself when they reach the grounds of the Academy, unsure whether it is due to "nature or some kind of blunder" that "we are more moved when we see those places in which, as we hold in memory, worthy men had circulated (*esse versatos*), than when we hear about their deeds or read their writings (*scriptum ... legamus*)" (V.i.2). Eager to see where their heroes had contemplated, chatted, and orated, zealous students would visit all manner of sites. Another one of Cicero's peers, his first cousin, Lucius Cicero, bashfully admits to having snuck down to the bay of Phalerum, "that place where, they say, Demosthenes used to declaim next to the waves so as to prepare his voice to overcome an uproar" (V.ii.5).³⁴ No one proposes tracking down Isocrates' writing desk.

³² He did, of course, operate a school—Cicero says Isocrates turned his *domus* (home) into a *ludus* (school) (*Brutus* §32; see also §48)—but it seems not to hold the same mystique for Romans as the Academy, Lyceum, Pynx, Stoa, and even agora did.

³³ "All civilisation comes through literature now, especially in our country. A Greek got his civilisation by talking and looking, and in some measure a Parisian may still do it. But we, who live remote from history and monuments, we must read or we must barbarise." (165) William Dean Howells, *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885).

³⁴ For tales of Demosthenes' odd training practices, see: Cicero *De Oratore* 1.61.260-1 and 3.213; Quintilian 11.3.130; Plutarch *Life of Demosthenes*; and Diogenes Laertius.

INEVITABLE IMPRECISION (PLATO'S *PHAEDRUS*)

Let us return to the Athens of the fifth and fourth centuries. Similarly discomforted by papyrus' over- and misuse (discerned by the ear more than the eye), in Plato's *Phaedrus*, Socrates teases writers—of poems, speeches, and laws—who are fanatical about getting everything in its right place, “turning back and forth at length what they have written, both gluing over and taking away” (*egrapsyen anô katô strephôn en chronôi, pros allêla kollôn te kai aphairôn*, 278e). Under the direction of an editor, writing twirls and twists (*strophos*), a frenetic chorus resilient to dizziness. Furthermore, in using a form of the verb for gluing (*kollôn*), Plato draws our attention to the thorough materiality of the graphic process in a more literal way, as did Aristophanes on Agathon's behalf. Like Alcidas, Plato also points to how much time (*en chronôi*) it takes to fine-tune all of a *logos*' parts. Earlier in their discussion, the still clearly enraptured Phaedrus responds with incredulity when Socrates asks him to recite the discourse on *eros* he has just heard Lysias deliver: does Socrates expect him to have memorized a *logos* that Lysias “had leisurely put together over much time” (*en pollôi chronoï kata scholên sunethêke*, 228a)? Just when Socrates prevails upon Phaedrus to draw up from memory any snippets not beyond recollection, Socrates notices sticking up beneath Phaedrus' garment the tell-tale sign of textual arousal: a stiff new copy of Lysias' speech. Papyrus is popping up everywhere!

Whereas Alcidas gripes about graphic rhetoric's inflexibility during a live debate, Plato's Socrates grapples with the graphic rhetor's struggle with looseness after publication. Accordingly, for Socrates the true horror wrought by the increasingly present *biblos* is the scary specter of scores of technically unsound speakers motor-mouthing away *in absentia*, and not, as it is for Alcidas, the sad sight (and sound) of rhetors who are not fully present in a rhetorical moment, whose rhetorical power is not attuned to and activated by the *kairos*. Socrates reminds

Phaedrus that “every word, once written down, is rolled around (*kulindeitai*) among both those who understand and those who have no interest in it” (275e). This rolling about (*kulindô*) smacks of textuality, as readers roll, unroll, and re-roll texts. Unlike Alcidas, Socrates frames textuality not as *akinêtos* (unmoving, *Writers* §28), but as superkinetic; a text once released from its writer really gets around. Unable to walk away from those who misunderstand it or walk toward those who seem simpatico, it is rolled around every which way, unable to put its foot down.

Written words may be fixed, but their meaning fluctuates from one reader to the next, even in the same reader from one sitting to the next. Therefore, “anyone supposing he’s left behind any art in writing (*technên...en grammasi*), and anyone supposing he’s received something clear and firm-footed from writing (*saphes kai bebaion ek grammatôn*),” Socrates proclaims, “would be awfully simple-minded (*euêtheias*; or “guileless”)” (275c). He later repeats this claim: “if Lysias or anyone else ever wrote or will write, in private or in public as a lawgiver, a political document, and in writing it believes that it possesses great firm-footedness (*bebaiotêta*) and clarity (*saphêneian*), then it is a degradation (*oneidos*) to the writer, whether anyone says so or not” (277d; Loeb with alterations). As Socrates clears up, writing in and of itself is not shameful and thus need not be rejected as a communication mode. Shame results not when one either speaks or writes without beauty (*to mê kalôs legein te kai graphein*), but when one verbalizes disgracefully or badly (*aischrôs te kai kakôs*, 258d). Whirling around and whittling words in the pursuit of precision is foolish at best.

Whereas Alcidas concerns himself with the immediate reaction of an all-eared audience to a polished graphic rhetor—usually eyes narrowed in suspicion (§12)—Socrates concentrates on the relationship that develops between writer and reader as a text slowly unfolds

itself, drawing out the duration of communicative contact. Of most interest to Socrates, then, relationship guru that he seems to be in the *Phaedrus*, is how or even whether the relationship between unchanging texts and polymorphous critical interpretations of them can be managed rhetorically. The rhetorical management he recommends takes two related forms that act in concert to, as Andrew Ford puts it, “confer a certain life on a text.”³⁵ The first is to endow what one writes with a somatic structure that communicates meaning through an order and proportion like one expects of its bodily equivalent. A writer’s goal with every *logos* should be “to put [it] together (*sunestanei*) like a living thing (*zôion*) that has a body (*sôma*) of its own, so as to be neither headless (*akephalon*) nor footless (*apoun*), but to have both a middle (*mesa*) and ends (*akra*), drawn together (*gegrammena*) appropriately (*prepont*’) in terms of one another and the whole” (264c).

Though this recommendation obviously has a figurative aspect for Plato, today we use headings and footnotes to help organize our words (and, in the case of footnotes, to build our scholarly ethos)³⁶ for readers distant from us and/or our topic, and we conventionally refer to the main segment of a written work as its “body.” Yet, *mirabile dictu*, such somatic words had an *almost* literal structural meaning in Plato’s time, too. As Too shows, “Plato demonstrates the potential of this vocabulary for irony when he plays on the misleading similarity between the words *kephalion*, key point, and *kephalê*, which denotes a work’s ‘head’ or beginning. He speaks of a text’s ‘head (*kephalê*)’ where an author like Isocrates would speak of its ‘key point

³⁵ Ford, *The Origins of Criticism*, 233.

³⁶ See Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

(*kephalaion*).³⁷ The difference is that a key point can emerge anywhere in a *corpus*. Isocrates advises on composing a *logos* in only one place, his letter to the son of Jason: “I tell the students in my school of philosophy that the first issue to spend time on (*diatribontas*) is the scope of the discourse as a whole and of its parts (*meresi*). When we have discovered this and the matter has been accurately determined, I say that we must seek the *ideai* (forms) by means of which what we have set out to do may be worked out thoroughly (*exergasthêsetai*) and fulfilled” (§8). Those steps reflect Isocrates’ (proto)typically philoponic ways and show his concern with arranging a sensible form from the start of rhetorical production, even if it is not the shape endorsed by Socrates.

To return to Plato’s playfulness, that, for Socrates, is the other marker of respectable writing (*paidia*; 276c-e, 277e, 278a-b). A writer who scribbles away in a playful spirit does not dread inevitable misunderstandings, because he refrains from committing anything serious or resulting from much exertion (*spoudê*, 276c-e, 277e) to papyrus. Because a book-roll “knows not to whom to speak (*legein*) or not”, whenever it is “read off-key or unjustly reviled, it always need its father to help it; for it lacks the ability to protect or help itself” (275e).³⁸ Lysias’ little *biblos*, for example, has rolled away from its father, being now outside the city gates and without protection from Socratic snark. If a published text is a child out on its own, then its writer-father should equip it with stranger danger defenses, making it either dazzlingly clear or dizzyingly complicated; for, the first fends off unwelcome misunderstandings, the second unwelcome (that is, lazy) readers. But since, for Socrates, absolute written clarity is unattainable and utter

³⁷ Too, *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates*, 52. The whole chapter (“The Unities of Discourse”) is illuminating; see 49ff for cites where and analysis of how Isocrates uses the vocabulary of beginning and ending.

³⁸ This father-child analogy of a writer to his book-roll emerges with poignancy in Ovid’s writings from exile, as I show in chapter 4.

complexity would yield a distorted textual body that no one could make head or tails of, a violation of his *logos-as-sôma* criterion, they are not viable options; thus, play. Good writing bounds along like a playful creature, but even so, what is written on objects—and here we join in Alcidamas’ tune (§28)—“can justly be called the image (*eidôlon*) of the living and ensouled *logos* (*logon...zônta kai empsuchon*)” (276a) that one speaks to others, thereby writing on tablets only of the soul.³⁹

At the end of the *Phaedrus*, Socrates names Isocrates as a rhetor-philosopher of promise (278e-279b); whether Plato was being cheeky or not, Isocrates certainly failed to live up to the writing as play principle. He labors, and he loves it. Seriously. In his analysis of the spectrum of writers/lovers in the *Phaedrus*, Jesper Svenbro attributes Socrates’ problem with labor- and time-intensive editing (278d-e; quoted above) to his rejection of “a certain fetishism about writing, a fetishism that makes writing not simply the name for the relationship between the writer and his reader but something distinct, separate, with its own intrinsic properties that belong to it, in itself—something that impresses the reader, who is powerless to withstand this seduction.”⁴⁰ Later rhetorical critics routinely associate Isocrates’ *Panegyricus* with the kind of exceedingly long and painstaking composition that objectifies a communicative interaction.⁴¹ In the *diegesis* of that work, Isocrates himself gives his readers permission to laugh at and look down on him if he “speaks” in a way incongruous with all the time (*toû chronou*) he has spent not only rubbing away at (*diatriphthentos*) his *logos* but also living (§14). Yet it is his

³⁹ 276a and 278a. See Plato’s *Theaetetus* 194c-194d for wordplay between *kêr* (heart) and *kêros* (wax) in reference to the imprint-holding soul and retentive memory of the wise.

⁴⁰ Jesper Svenbro, *Phrasikleia: An Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 214.

⁴¹ At least ten years: Dionysius of Halicarnassus’ *De Compositione* 25, Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria* X.4, Longinus’ *Peri Hupsous* §4.2, Plutarch’s *Moralia* 350e-351a. I return to this estimated composition time below.

Panathenaicus that affords us a prolonged look at his aging editorial body, as well as at the corps of present and past pupils he gathers around him for editorial assistance, and so it is to that text that I now turn.

1.2 SOFT IN HIS OLD AGE?

So far, I have shown the poetic origin of editorial representation and set forth for comparison two accounts of graphic rhetoric contemporary with Isocrates: that of Alcidamas, which asserted the superior rhetorical power of improvisational speech over set-pieces during live debates, and that of Plato, which privileged spoken conversation tailored specifically for a given interlocutor and warned of the dangers lurking for released book-rolls. Though Isocrates has different notions, he is sensitive to the ambassadorial function of book-rolls, in that they can do political good over great distances only if worded with great care. The intensive editorial focus of his *Panathenaicus* makes this *logos* one of a kind in Attic rhetoric. In the course of this work, Isocrates details several rounds of revision, some more rough—on him and the students he enlists for advice—than others.

From the start, he prepares readers to expect it to move with a slower tempo and fewer arabesques than previous ones. He relates in the opening passages that, having left agonistic argument and its affectedly plain style to others, he “devoted [his] efforts to giving advice on the true interests of Athens and the rest of the Hellenes, writing in a style rich in many telling points, in contrasted and balanced phrases not a few, and in the other figures of speech which give brilliance to oratory and makes an impression on an audience and compels their audible appreciation” (§2; Loeb with changes). Such abundance, however, does not befit a wise—and no doubt wizened—man of 94 years (§3). It is not so much that it requires “no easy work” and

“much devotion of the mind” (*oudeis...rhaidiôs tôn ponein ... sphodra prosechontôn ton noûn*, §3) as that it misleadingly suggests youthfulness that makes it unsuitable for him. Isocrates prompts readers to find this *logos* “more soft” (*malakôteros*) and less “busy” (*poikilion*)⁴² than his other published works (*diadedomenôn*) (§4), but by choice and not because his rhetorical skills are as shriveled as his old body. Actually, though, this *logos* boasts many sturdy rhetorical figurations, showing that editorial interjections are often a form of protesting too much.

Isocrates continues in an autobiographical vein, referring to being small-voiced and without swagger—building the framework for what Too calls his “politics of the small voice”—as justification for why he retreated indoors to philosophize about, work through, and write out his thoughts (*philosopheîn kai poneîn kai graphein ha dianoêtheiên*). His themes? Not cramped and private ones (*mikrôn, idiôn*), but large and public matters of the Hellenes, and rulers, and *poleis* (§11). *Panathenaicus* itself is such a discourse. In it, Isocrates takes up Athens as his foundational topic, not only celebrating its contributions to Hellenic culture but also contrasting them with Sparta’s achievements. At first, it is eminently timely, since Athenians are in the nationalistic throes of the yearly Panathenaic festival. Having recorded his thoughts but not yet written a conclusion, Isocrates spends time going over (*sundiatribein*) his inchoate *logos* with three or four young charges, opting also to send for a former student who looks favorably on Spartan mores to read it and make visible (*dêlôseien*) any falsehoods or infelicities that may have

⁴² In her introduction to the anthology *Intratextuality: Greek and Roman Textual Relations*, ed. Sharrock and Helen Morales (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), Alison Sharrock digresses about the word *poikilia*, which “signified a nexus of words intimately involved in ancient and modern imagery for texts, such as embroidery, weaving, subtlety, complexity, a shifting, multicoloured surface, notions of richness, artistry, even deception, as well as variety.” It carries with it a “negative connotation ... which, for all its vial exuberance, often conveys the sense that its referent is not ‘simple’ and so can’t be trusted. Ancient literary critics’ use of the word, therefore, expresses a mixture of admiration and uncertainty. It is in that insecure ambivalence that reading comes into being” (14).

escaped his notice (*parelathen*, §200). Isocrates' use of a verb of visibility pre-sages our "revision", that part of the editing process during or from which we see our writing through the eyes of another.

But what if we do not like what we see? What Isocrates' current students find faultless, this one former student finds flawed, however much he tries at first to hide his dissatisfaction. Once this past pupil has made clear (*edêlôse*, §202) his reservations, Isocrates cannot overlook (*periopsomai*; the visual language continues) what he considers the pupil's "laborious *logos*" (*ponêroîs logois*, §203). In a foolhardy attempt to emulate his teacher's philoponic rhetoric, the pupil produces tiresome words instead of worked-out ones. Isocrates goes on correcting the corrector until the pupil claims *aporia* (no way out; §216), the dialectical equivalent of crying "uncle!" in an arm wrestling match. Making a teaching moment out of the whole disagreeable business, Isocrates excuses his pupil's brashness (§218), points out the life-long nature of education (§230), and seeks the opinions of his current students, who, try as they might, do not clearly grasp what all the fuss was about (§229-230).

In the first quiet moment he gets after this editorial showdown, Isocrates dictates these developments to his scribe. Once the new words are committed to a wax tablet or spare papyrus scrap (he does not specify), Isocrates revisits and revises everything written up to that point, reading and going over (*dieziôn*) it by himself after having let three or four days go by and some critical distance build up (§231). What perspective on *logos*-writing does Isocrates open up? Book-roll rhetors do not necessarily write out all the parts of their drafty *logoi*—especially when one part represents a feisty debate that need only be recorded as it happened and not edited (that's the impression Isocrates is going for, anyway)—nor probably the final copy or any iteration in between; this is the work of specially trained slaves, with yet other slaves and/or

possibly booksellers taking charge of successive copies. As much as we might think of the book-roll rhetor as a solo artist scribbling away all by his lonesome, even his painstakingly editing can be collaborative.

The *logos* destined to be called *Panathenaicus* has thus been through a full course of editing. Still, Isocrates finds himself so torn by it—thinking the Athenian segments “well and justly written” (*kalôs kai dikaiôs gegraphôs*, §231) but the Spartan parts hostile and unsympathetic (§232)—that he “many times was on the point of blotting out (*exaleiphein*) or burning (*katakaein*) it, and as often changed my mind when I thought with pity of my old age (*to gêras*) and the labor (*ton ponon*) which had been spent” on it (§232; Loeb). He therefore opts to call in yet more former students to assist him in choosing whether “to suppress it altogether or to pass it around among whoever wishes to receive it” (§233). The *logos* is then read out (by Isocrates?), and the students roar with approval; well, all but one, a Spartan. He freely offers his editorial advice, sure that Isocrates does not intend to neglect (*paraleipsein*) the *logos* as it presently stands, genuinely welcomes criticism (*anepitimêtos*) on it, and does not invite them there just for applause and flattery (§245).

The Spartan’s criticisms pertain to the *logos*’ fate at the hands of others. Because Isocrates strives to achieve his very own idiolect—being like others humiliates and distresses him (§237)—his writing demands a lot of its readers. But, as Plato’s Socrates reminds us, writing cannot make demands. For that reason, indifferent readers will scan Isocrates’ *logos* quickly (*rhaidion katametheîn*), and only those who go over it precisely (*akribôs diexiôusin*, §246) will notice all the fine detail others pass over.⁴³ Most readers, though, resemble the former. The Spartan raises the issue of intelligibility for lazy or unknowledgeable readers,

⁴³ At *Phaedrus* 264c, Phaedrus seems flattered that Socrates thinks Phaedrus can precisely (*akribôs*) discern Lysias’ reasons for arranging his *logos* as he does.

acknowledging Isocrates' likely objection that catering to them would "render the *logos* naked and strip it of the honor which would otherwise attach to it through those who study hard and are willing to take pains" (*dia tous ponoûntas kai pragmata sphisin autois parechontas*) to read it on its terms (§247; Loeb).

What should Isocrates do? The wisest, the Spartan contends, sometimes take too long to arrive at a political point that even an inexperienced speaker could quickly make his audience understand (§248), so he advises his teacher to be more explicit about what thought sparked his *logos* in the first place, for the sake of both Athenian and Spartan readers. This lack of directness is a marked problem with unkaïrotic rhetoric, which diffuses across time as its composition is drawn further and further out. Isocrates also needs to revise his writings to better suit the culturally diverse audience he hopes to reach. He seems to recognize already that if he wants a *logos* on comparative politics to circulate widely, he must alter it; hence the anxiety that prompts him to call over his former students in the first place.⁴⁴ Spartans will not read Isocrates looking for advice on how to conduct their lives—they are too steeped in their own traditions for that (§250)—but to enjoy his rich treatment of their greatest deeds and exploits (§253); however, as it currently stands, *Panathenaicus* will receive a mixed reception. Most will hate Isocrates (§250), but the most sensible—who already have and are amazed at certain *logoi* of his—will wrestle with it for a time (*chronon*), see the praise of Spartan achievements as justified, and come to charitably classify the barbs as misguided rather than deserving of hate (§251). If Isocrates' account of his former pupil's account can be relied upon, it seems Isocratean *logoi* did travel and receive hospitality in distant lands, something speeches delivered in and tailored to the Athenian

⁴⁴ Isocrates acknowledges his two audiences at §240, when he writes of a "double *logos*."

Assembly, for instance, could not do. Isocrates' graphic rhetoric, then, has international currency, meaning his *logoi politikoi* truly have cross-cultural political dimension and appeal.

The Spartan obviously has his teacher's best interests in mind, hoping Isocrates will achieve immortality, not the kind "the gods enjoy but that which plants in future generations a remembrance of those who have distinguished themselves in any noble endeavor" (260; Loeb). How? Not by burning or suppressing the *logos* under discussion, but by revising and supplementing it before giving it to those who desire it and finally benefitting from all the time and pains spent upon its completion (*diorthôsanta kai prosgrapsanta pasas tas diatribas tas peri auton yeynêmenas didonai tois boulomenois lambanein*, §262). The spirit of Athens' political culture, too, will get a lift from it, even if Isocrates' competitors do not fully see that their work compares even less favorably to Isocrates' as Homers' imitators to his (§263). Isocrates' other assembled students receive the Spartan's assessments with enthusiasm, not able to edit any of his edits (§264). The old man himself, though, praises the Spartan's natural endowment (*tên phusin*) and care (*epimeleian*), but says absolutely nothing about whether his student "had hit upon my purpose or missed the mark", instead letting him retain his own opinion (§265; Loeb). That Isocrates does not chastise him, though, says something in and of itself, given the total take-down of the last student who wielded his voice like an editorial tool.

Isocrates incorporates this second round of editing into his text, which, he tells us, ended up taking three years to assume the form we readers now see. It was not editorial queasiness, however, that caused the publication lag time, but something more closely resembling actual queasiness. A nasty illness, the sort that snatches up even the youngest and most fit, hit Isocrates hard, but he "passed every day of that time with such *philoponos* that those who knew of my industry as well as those who learned of it from them admired me more because of this fortitude

than because of the things for which I had formerly been praised” (§267; Loeb). Any time he did waver, friends who had “read again and again the portion of my discourse which I had written, begged and urged me not to leave it half-finished or incomplete” (§268; Loeb). A sensible man, he allows himself to be persuaded by their pleas, even though he is in such a state that someone else in his place would not only refuse to write his own *logos*, but would not act as a hearer to one “worked out” (*ponêsantos*) and “turned out” (*deiknuontos*) by another (§270).

Why, if everything turned out well in the end, would someone with such a tale of suffering, strain, and indecorous sickness want it represented in his final *logos*? Isocrates reflects on this curiosity he has done plenty to nurture. He has rhetoricized—that is, made a means of persuasion—his numerous writing difficulties, “making visible” (*dêlôsai*) how writing “develops” (*gegenêmena*) and praising those listeners (*tôn akroatôn*) who not only accept such a *logos* but also deem it more serious (*spoudaioterous*), philosophical (*philosophôterous*), instructional (*didaskalikous*), and artistic (*technikous*) than words recorded for merely epideictic or agonistic purposes (§271). Isocrates de-mystifies his writing process, perhaps less in the hope of reforming those skimmers and scanners who do an injustice to careful writing with their careless reading than in asserting himself against those who claim, wrongly, that writing is easy. The length of his *logos* and the harrowing composition narrative it contains evidence a burgeoning awareness of the demands of textuality.

1.3 WRITING WORDS

With his multiple rounds of tweaking and refining, Isocrates contributes to the further objectification of discourse, and even though writing-made-public has no one to speak authoritatively for it (even when the author himself is present), he places a premium on

precision. What lacks exactitude, on the other hand, is the vocabulary of writing. Among its disambiguated words are: *graphô*, which, as I mentioned earlier, can mean scratch, scrape, represent, draw, paint, or write; *eikôn*, an image, portrayal, or likeness; *ergon*, a deed done with one's body, be it a symbolic activity or not; and *akribeia*, an etched-like precision. It is therefore possible to describe the process and product of writing with the same words one would use to describe those of sculpture, drawing, and painting.⁴⁵ By skillfully exploiting those ambiguities, Isocrates situates himself among the finest craftsman of Hellas in the proem to his *Antidosis*. In §2, he analogizes that to dismiss him as a dikographer (writer of law-speeches) is to call Pheidias, the craftsman of the Parthenon's gold and ivory Athena, a fashioner of mere figurines (*koroptlathon*) or Zeuxis or Parrhasias, premiere painters, mere tablet daubers (*ta pinakia graphousin*; note the *graph-* verb). There is nothing “mere” about the way the four of them have perfected their respective art forms. This vexing qualifier, however, dogs Isocrates even in his textual afterlife.

For example, the historian and moralist Plutarch (c. 46 – 120 CE) sneers that Pericles directed the construction of the Parthenon—which, of course, features the art of Pheidias—within the same amount of time that Isocrates “sat at home, poring over his work”, that is the *Panegyricus*, “seeking out word choices” (*Moralia* 350e-351a). The implication clearly is that some so-called civic efforts are less politically expedient, advantageous, and far-reaching than others. Cicero, who like Isocrates had no military experience, pre-empts the argument of Plutarch by at least a century at *Brutus* §255-58. Here, after acknowledging yet quickly omitting the rare general whose wisdom serves the state during war and peace, he compares the worth of one “*magnus orator*” to that of “*minutis imperatoribus*” (minor generals, §256). Declaring the

⁴⁵ For more on the history and development of shared visual and verbal terms, see Ford's *The Origins of Criticism*, chapter 4, especially 94, 96-101.

former of greater benefit to the city (*in hac urbe*, §255), Cicero deems even one of great speech more worth having than several forts in the boonies are worth capturing (§256). When it comes to judging the relative worth of political contributions—like so much else—brute utility and supreme quality require different criteria. The final point of connection between Cicero and Isocrates comes when Cicero surmises that “it was more important to the Athenians to have a secure roof on their homes than the superlatively lovely ivory statue of Minerva; however, I should have preferred to be Phidias to the very best fabricator of roofs” (§257). Any orator with serviceable skills can reach out and protect a friend in a time of need, but few have what it takes to fashion Wisdom in words.⁴⁶ Shortly after Cicero, the rhetorical critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a Greek transplant to Augustan Rome, compares Isocrates’ rhetoric to Pheidias’ *technê* on the basis of their shared “majesty, consummate technique, and reputation” (*to semnon kai megalotechnon kai axiômatikon*) (*Isocrates* 3).⁴⁷

Isocrates, for his part, tries to ignore those who belittle him and reconfirms his “choice both to speak and to write (*kai legein kai graphein*) not about tiny personal squabbles, but rather of matters so great and lofty that none could put a hand to it (*epicheirêseis*)—except those near me or who wish to imitate me” (§3). But still, so many people have the wrong idea about him that he decides to set the record straight, for his contemporaries and his successors. We then see

⁴⁶ This is a variation on a point Cicero makes again and again in *Brutus*.

⁴⁷ In the *Peri Hupsous*, Longinus cites as an example of “frigidity” and “childishness” a few lines from the historian Timaeus’ account of Alexander the Great wherein Timaeus frames Alexander’s subjugation of Asia as taking fewer years to accomplish than Isocrates’ *Panegyricus*, which is merely a proposal to unite and gear up for war against Persia. Tongue firmly in cheek, Longinus marks this as an “amazing comparison” (*thaumastê...sugkrisis*) by whose logic Isocrates is mightier than the Spartans, who took 30 years to conquer Messene (§4.1-2). That’s not to say Longinus cherishes Isocrates as master of lofty language. Longinus much prefers Demosthenes and Plato and opines that “in all things, exacting precision (*akribes*) runs the risk of constriction (*mikrotêtos*); in the management of greatness, as in that of wealth, there is also need for a little neglect of it” (§33).

a change in how he wields the vocabulary of writing and views his relationship to sculptors and painters. He decides, as he relates in §7, “to write a discourse (*graphein logos*) which would be just as an image of my thought and of my way of life besides (*eikôn tês emês dianoiias kai tôn allôn emoi bebiômenôn*); for I hoped this would be both the best means of making the truth known about me and, at the same time, a monument to me (*ton auton touton mnêmeion*) after my death, more noble than dedicatory constructions of bronze (*polu kallion tôn chalkôn anathêmatôn*).”

First, by issuing forth an authoritative statement of his pedagogical and rhetorical principles, Isocrates seeks to spare himself the humiliation of continually making the same self-justifications. Anyone who hereafter doubts Isocrates’ worth can just speak to the hand(writing). Just as some writing works to invite discussion and debate, some writing works to foreclose it. Second, statues of the bodily forms of Athens’ best are a less fitting testament to *kalôs* men and their *kalôs polis* than that which Isocrates proposes and puts forth. He hews and hammers at his chosen medium, issuing forth a durable likeness that captures precisely those aspects of himself that a cultured man of Athens wants preserved: the *polis*-improving contributions of his contemplative ways—in Isocrates’ case as manifest in deeds done in words—and approach to communal life. Andrew Ford deems the *Antidosis* “like an icon in that it is well-wrought and enduring; but it goes beyond what are normally called icons because it has captured the ‘motives’ of its subject, the thoughts that have governed his deeds and words.”⁴⁸ In general, Isocrates writes such that we see not only his thoughts but also the thinking of his thoughts. All manner of qualifications, elaborations, and reiterations testify to how much he thinks, overthinks, and rethinks during the writing process.

⁴⁸ Ford, *The Origins of Criticism*, 240.

In his *Evagoras*, a *logos* addressed to Nicocles, the bereaved son of the recently deceased Evagoras, Isocrates elaborates on his point that not all artful and potentially enduring representations are created equal. He prefers his material and his method “because I know, in the first place, that noble men pride themselves not so much on bodily beauty as to be desired for their deeds and wisdom, and second, because I know that images stamped into metal or stone (*tous tupous*) must of necessity remain solely among those in whose cities they were set up, whereas images stamped into words (*tous logous*) may be circulated throughout Hellas” (§74; Loeb with changes).⁴⁹ Written texts are mobile monuments. The words Isocrates provides in the face of death are not just epigraphs or epitaphs, which are written upon (*epi-*) a memorial; they are the memorial itself. Etymology bears him out: *graphô* is the root of “grave”, after all. The mobility of texts allows them to access, be passed around among, and dwelled upon by those who think well (*diadothentas en taîs eû phronountôn diatribais*, §74), performing on behalf of the dead Evagoras (and eventually dead Isocrates) a kind of *danse macabre* as they roll on from reader to reader: he did this...what will *you* do while there’s still time?

The circulation of graphic rhetoric thus permits it an advantage enjoyed by neither volatile vocalizations nor stationary epigrammatic objects, the former of which evaporate into the air, the latter of which sit unread in the open air. Sit unread? In his book *The Scroll and the Marble*, Peter Bing examines relevant material evidence and holds “the un-read Muse”—a pun on his earlier book, *The Well-Read Muse* (about Callimachus, actually)—responsible for the

⁴⁹ See also *Evagoras* §3 (“Men of ambition and greatness of soul do all that lies in their power to leave behind a memory of themselves that shall never die (*athanaton ... mnêmên*)”; Loeb); §70-71, immortality; §73 (“...I hold that while likenesses of the body are fine memorials, those of deeds and thoughts are of far greater value...” ([*Ê*] *goûmai kala men einai mnêmeîa kai tas tôn sômatôn eikonas, polu mentoi pleionos axias tas tôn praxeôn kai tês dianoiias*)); and *To Nicocles* §36 (“Prefer to leave behind you as a memorial likenesses (*tas eikonas*) of your excellences (*tês aretês*) rather than those of your body (*toû sômatos*).”).

“pervasive indifference”⁵⁰ ancients seemed to have shown toward dedicatory writing on stone. Thus, even if a statue contains an epigrammatic caption detailing the *dianoia* of the depicted person, that caption is unlikely to be read; “[r]ooted to the spot, it has to wait, relying on the uncertain prospect of a literate person (not just any viewer) first of all seeing and then taking the trouble to read it.”⁵¹ Texts, however, circulate among the elite, enter into their conversation, and splash out into yet more communicative circles. Isocrates never refers to the corpus care tools of the pumice or, as would be especially apt, the file, but he works language as though it is Parian marble, though marble is too stuck in its ways to be attractive to him as a medium. The other aspect of metal and stone body-shaped tributes that Isocrates claims to trump is that an admiring on-looker cannot press his body into its form, whereas one can work toward emulating the ways, thoughts, and words of those whose image is pressed into papyrus (*tous tropous...tas dianoias...tois legomenois*, §75).⁵² Who fashions the best commemorations and who strives to imitate the commemorated? Those who appreciate the artistic (*technikôs*, §73) and opt not to be lazy (*mê rathûmeô*, §75): philoponic people (§73).

Isocrates is not the only Athenian at or around this time to link writing with works of stone, metal, or paint, and the others who do are rarely so self-satisfied with the linkage. Fan, as we have seen, of extended comparisons, Alcidas analogizes that a written *logos* is to a spoken *logos* as “bronzes of men, portraits of stone, and paintings of living beings” (*tôn chalkôn andriantôn kai lithinôn agalmatôn kai yegrammenon zôiôn*) are to living bodies. Writers put

⁵⁰ Peter Bing, *The Scroll and the Marble: Studies in Reading and Reception in Hellenistic Poetry* (University of Michigan Press, 2009), 127.

⁵¹ Bing, *The Scroll and the Marble*, 122.

⁵² All the corporeality in Isocrates’ whole *corpus* brings the following question to mind (well, to fingertips, actually): with all the ceaseless working required to bring them forth, can we not classify Isocrates’ memorials as testaments not only to his *dianoia* but also to his *sôma*? Such a classification would surely accord with recent scholarly attempts to reveal and revel in the bodily side of rhetorical production.

forth “likenesses, forms, and imitations of the spoken word” (*eidôla kai schêmata kai mimêmata logôn*), just as artists issue forth “imitations of true bodies” (*mimêmata tôn alêthinôn sômatôn*, §27). While a corporeal *eikôn* likely out-beautifies a human body, even the mightiest looking image is locked in a certain pose and unable to move (*akinêtos*), just as a meticulously prepared speech might read better than an extemporaneous one, but lack the flexibility to adjust to the quick-changing contours of rhetorical circumstance (§28). Word chiselers focus on the wrong bodies: their bodies of work. Instead, they should mind the actual bodies that benefit or suffer from timely rhetorical acts or the lack of them. As I have discussed above, rhetoric has a philanthropic dimension and responsibility; logographers hurt both their fellows and their reputations when they show themselves to be unreliable or even useless in times of individual or communal need. Graphic rhetoric “involves their composers in inconsistency”, Alcidas argues, for any off-the-cuff remarks they make during an oral debate will seem weak and poor in comparison to the rhapsodic richness of that which they wrote out in full and memorized in slow preparation for the event (§14).

Reacting to this charge, which, again, probably pre-dates Alcidas’ formal indictment, Isocratean issues a rejoinder at *Antidosis* §48-50, writing that the extemporaneous speakers who dominate Athens’ agonistic and deliberative spaces quickly wear out their welcome. On days when they are not sounding off in those spaces, they can barely be “endured” (*anektous*), whereas devotees of wisdom are honored at all times and always hit the spot. While the voices of phonic rhetors grow increasingly tedious from speech to speech, the writings of philosophers like Isocrates “are admired more and more as they become better and more widely known” (Loeb). Isocrates also reverses Alcidas’ judgment—made with the manifold bodily analogies I have quoted above—that sprightly speaking outranks laborious writing in difficulty.

But, of course, Alcidas succumbs to writing's various seductions, boasting that with just a squeak of labor (*mikra ponêsantes*, §30) he can outdo logographers in their own medium (*logous graphein*, §32), explaining that not everyone has had a chance to hear him in person, adding that writing over time reflects growth in one's thinking and thus can be viewed as wholesomely diagnostic, and admitting his desire to leave behind "a memorial of myself" (*mnêmeia...autôn*, §32). For all their supposed differences, he and Isocrates call their rhetorical projects by the exact same name.

Plato's Socrates sounds like Alcidas in his criticism of writing's unresponsive if artful stance on a given rhetorical matter (275d-e), comparing it to life-drawing (*zôgraphia*), "for the creatures of drawing stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence" and then, again similar to Alcidas, continuing the analogy: "and so it is with written words; you might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they always say one and the same thing" (Loeb). Like drawings (and many people), written words might seem deep at first, but further investigation reveals them to be pitifully one-dimensional. Moreover, just as Alcidas grants that the figuration and arrangement of written words, when viewed from a book-roll, produce a certain *ekplexis* (amazement) (*ho gegrammenos logos, eni schêmati kai taxei kechrêmonos, ek bibliou <men> theôroumenos exei tinas ekplêxeis*, §28), Socrates concedes that writing does seem *deinos* (awe-inspiring, clever, 275d). But a book-roll, no matter how formidable it *seems*, boasts no defenses and remains utterly at the mercy of any hands into which it falls. Isocrates' favoritism of writing's mobility becomes Socrates' fear.

Socrates' insistence that writing lacks *bebaiotês*, *firm-footedness* (277d, from the verb *bainô*, meaning "walk, step, stand, have a footing"), is fitting—not coincidentally, one

supposes—given his two criteria for respectable graphic rhetoric: footiness is achievable, firmness not. Lysias’ *biblio-logos*, though, strives for firmness. The problems Socrates identifies in its structure and style echo those errors in the sense of it: a fixation with control renders Lysias’ *logos*, like the non-lover he champions within it, unfeeling and deadened. Structure-wise, Lysias reiterates the few points he sets forth several different ways (235a), showing a reluctance to wander or explore. Style-wise, Socrates judges Lysias “to have thoroughly turned/chiseled” (*apotetorneutai*) his words in an effort to render them “clear and compact and precise” (*saphê kai stroggula, kai akribôs*) (234e); in vain, of course. Plato’s lexical choices here cast Lysias as an artisan of cold, hard objects. *Stroggula* describes the result of wearing down processes—like erosion—that polish rough, jagged edges over time periods of near geological length. This word can also be used to characterize rotund bodies that lack sharp angles. Further, *akribeia* was a term of critical analysis for both plastic and linguistic objects, as Jerome Jordan Pollitt demonstrates in his study of ancient Greek art.⁵³

This hammering-out language emerges most fully in descriptions of the physicality of *poetic* composition—from Aristophanes to Callimachus to Horace—specifically to connote “labour and refinement.”⁵⁴ As I have shown in the introduction, Aristophanes depicts the Athenian tragedian Agathon as “turning/chiseling away” at words (*torneuei...epôn*, *Thesmophoriazusae* 54-5) and planning everything in wax before casting it in metal (56-7) in the manner of a sculptor. The other word-working poet Aristophanes interrupts in the middle of his elevated work is Euripides, who, in a state of high annoyance, complains several times he has no

⁵³ Jerome Jordan Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art: Criticism, History, and Terminology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

⁵⁴ Riemer Faber, “The Literary Metaphor of the Chisel (*Tornus*) in *Eclogue* 3.38,” *Hermes* 128.3 (2000): 377.

scholê (leisure time) to spare, devoting it all to his verses (*Acharians*, lines 407 and 411).⁵⁵

Socrates thus links Lysias to two circulating commonplaces of poetic creation: chiseling and ample leisure time in which to do it (*Phaedrus* 228a, 278e). Also, by using cohesive chiseling language early in the dialogue, Plato sets up the comparison of Lysias' book-roll to an inscribed tombstone (*epigrammatos*) that comes at 264d-e.⁵⁶ Curiously both rock solid and easily deconstructed, precise and spattered (*beblêsthai*, 264b), compact and loose, Lysias' *biblos* cannot withstand Socratic analytics.

It is well worth noting that not once, but twice Phaedrus promises to erect a statue of Socrates if he outdoes Lysias' *logos* on *eros* (235d and 236b). Though Phaedrus never gets around to it, Plato's dialogue itself serves this function, joining Isocrates and Alcidamas in using graphic rhetoric to preserve aspects of a person that spoken words, stone, and metal cannot. Actually, Plato—who, Diogenes Laertius reminds us, once cared a great deal for drawing and writing poetry (*graphikês epimelêthênai kai poiêmata graphai*) (*Lives* 3.5)—joins not only Isocrates but also Lysias in being described as chiseling at his words. In §25 of his *Peri Suntheseôs Onomatôn/De Compositione Verborum*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus puts Demosthenes' proverbial painstaking in its rhetorical context by detailing Isocrates' and Plato's engraving (*gluptois*) and chiseling (*toreutois*) way with words (*logous*) at that time. Dionysius cites Isocrates' at least decade long preparation of the *Panegyricus*, a composition narrative we have heard before, but Plato's tale is new: "Plato did not cease, when eighty years old, to comb and curl his dialogues and reshape them in every way (*ktenizôn kai bostruchizôn, kai panta proton anaplekôn*). Surely every scholar is acquainted with the stories of Plato's love of labor

⁵⁵ See Nieddu's "A Poet at Work" for a closer look at how Aristophanes deploys Euripidean techniques in a mocking fashion.

⁵⁶ See Ford, *The Origins of Criticism*, 243-244, for excellent analyses of the Midas epigram.

(*tês philoponias*), especially that of the tablet which they say was found after his death, with the beginning of the *Republic* ('I went down yesterday to the Piraeus together with Glaucon the son of Ariston') arranged in elaborately varying (*poikilôs*) orders" (trans. Usher with changes).⁵⁷

While for Isocrates editing is like yanking out hairs, for Plato it is like styling them. Dionysius depicts Plato "as the writerly equivalent of some elderly dandy standing before a mirror, primping and making sure each last strand of hair is perfectly in place",⁵⁸ as Bing sees it.

Reflected are the images of two very different editorial bodies, the one sick, the other slick.

However sorely we may be tempted to mock them for their efforts, Dionysius makes the case that it is "far more reasonable for a man who is composing public speeches, eternal memorials of his own powers, to attend even to the slightest details, than it is for the disciples of painters and workers in relief, who display the dexterity and industry of their hands in a perishable medium, to expend the finished resources of their art on veins and down and bloom and similar minutiae" (trans. Usher).⁵⁹

Writing words have to them an artfully unspecific dimension that permits of all sorts of analogies between domains of verbal and visual art. Through the interpretations of new generations of readers, the word-works of Isocrates, Alcidas, Plato, and other Athenians live on. The word Isocrates and Alcidas use of artful supplements to memory is *mnêmeion* (memorial; Plato's Socrates uses *hupomnêmata*, reminder, 276d), which translates in Latin into *monumentum*, literally, to teach, warn, or advise the mind. Indeed, Cicero refers to their collective papyrus pages as a looming "*monumentis litteris*" (literary monument, *Brutus* §26). In

⁵⁷ See also Diogenes Laertius' *Lives* 3.37: "Euphorion and Panaetius relate that the beginning (*tên archên*) of *The Republic* was found several times revised and rewritten (*eirêkasi pollakis estrammenên heuêsthai*)..."

⁵⁸ Bing, *The Scroll and the Marble*, 1.

⁵⁹ Dionysius makes almost the same point in his book-roll on *Demosthenes* at §51. See also his book-rolls on *Lysias*, *Isocrates*, and *Thucydides* (esp. §24).

the final sections of this chapter, I argue that Isocrates' lovingly and painstakingly erected self-memorials live on in the spirit of Rome's poetry.

1.4 BUILDING ON ISOCRATES

As I asserted above, philoponic rhetoric rises again in the poetry of Catullus, Horace, and Ovid. Two commonplaces emerge from their preference for muscle over muse, and both represent the solidification of Isocratean approaches toward textuality. The first I designate the "take nine years" *topos*. Catullus and Horace specify nine years as the optimal duration between the conception and publication of a poetic collection, and later Quintilian, though a champion of writing out and correcting one's speaking notes and subsequent pages for publication, cites this number as more than potentially problematic for orators. In c. 95, Catullus taunts a contemporary poet called Volusius, also a target in c. 36, contrasting the voluminous poetic productions of Volusius with one sturdy and stately poem of Cinna, which took him 9 years to complete. Decades after Catullus slips the surly bonds of more than just poetic meter, Horace pens his *Ars Poetica*, explicitly addressed to certain young members of the aristocratic Piso family who seem keen on writing and circulating verses. Horace advises the boys to submit their verses to a small, trusted circle of others for feedback, and then put their pages under house arrest for nine years before considering them for publication (386-389). Unlike Cinna's, this is not a nine-year writing/editing process, but nine years of critical distance.

What ties Isocrates to the "take nine years" *topos*? Intriguingly, Dionysius of Halicarnassus⁶⁰ and Quintilian, among others, record ten years, at least, as the time it took Isocrates to complete his *Panegyricus*. The *Panathenaicus*, we saw earlier, did not come quickly

⁶⁰ *De Compositione* 25.

or easily, either. In Book 10.4 of his magisterial twelve-volume *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian comes to the topic of emendation. He enumerates three editing operations—*adiicere*, *detrahere*, *mutare* (to add, to drag away, to change) (10.4.1)—and sets limits on appropriate correction time for an orator. “That we make allowances for Cinna having taken nine years to write *Smyrna*, and for Isocrates, who in the very least they say took ten years to finish *Panegyricus*,” Quintilian holds, “matters not at all to the orator, whose help will be too late” if fastidious editing holds it up (10.4.4). But he does recommend putting the writing away for a time, so that its writer will come to look upon it with critical eyes and not the way he looks at an adorable newborn baby. Some take this “don’t coo at your first draft” advice too far, though, and Quintilian likens them to doctors who slice and dice at what is perfectly healthy, their “bad care (*cura peiora*)” resulting in scarred (*cicatricosa*) and bloodless (*exsanguia*) bodies. Therefore, everyone should endeavor to find in his writings something that pleases or at least suffices, “so that the work is polished by the file, not worn away by it (*ut opus poliat lima, non exerat*)” (10.4.4).

In c. 95, Catullus’ depicts Cinna’s little book-roll of poetry as “a small monument” that travels, showing a glimmer of Isocrates’ exploitation of the ambiguity of *graphô*. By means of the corresponding and similarly ambiguous Latin verb *scribo*, my four poets solidify a second Isocratean quality into a *topos*. Through the “mock rock” *topos*, they at once treat their papyrus and pen like chisel and stone (mock as mimic) and denigrate the inferior qualities of stone (mock as taunt).⁶¹ In a 62 BCE trial about the citizenship of the legally-embattled Greek poet Archias,

⁶¹ See Habinek, *The Politics of Latin Literature*, chapter 5, for how and why poets would “turn paper into stone”. A more familiar example is Shakespeare’s *Sonnet #55*: “Not marble, nor the gilded monuments / Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme; / But you shall shine more bright in these contents / Than unswept stone, besmear’d with sluttish time. / When wasteful war shall statues overturn, / And broils root out the work of masonry, / Nor Mars his sword nor war’s quick fire shall burn / The living record of your memory. / ‘Gainst death and all oblivious enmity / Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room, / Even in the eyes of all posterity / That

Cicero builds his defense for his client around the memorializing prowess of poets, a skill in which Archias excels and of which elite Romans should take advantage. Sounding uncannily like Isocrates,⁶² Cicero avers that: “Many superior men have been zealous to leave behind statues and portraits, simulacra not of their minds, but of their bodies, but shouldn’t we much prefer to leave behind effigies of our wisdom and excellence, expressed and polished by the utmost talent?” (*An statuas et imagines, non animorum simulacra, sed corporum, studiose multi summi homines reliquerunt, consiliorum relinquere ac virtutum nostrarum effigiem nonne multo malle debemus, summis ingeniis expressam et politam?*) (*Pro Archia* §30). Like Isocrates, a poet memorializes himself more than anyone else. For instance, Horace seals his third roll of odes by crediting himself with having constructed “a monument more enduring than bronze and more lofty than regal pyramids stuck in place, which neither destructive rain nor the uncontrollable north wind or the succession of neither innumerable years nor fleeting time can erode” (*Exegi monumentum aere perennius / regalique situ pyramidum altius, / quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens / possit diruere aut innumerabilis / annorum series et fuga temporum.*) (III.30.1-5). And Ovid caps off his 15-volume *Metamorphoses* with a part prayer, part prophecy of his verses’ obduracy against “devouring ages” (873). The mobility of comparably compact poetic monuments frees them to roll around in the farthest domains of Rome’s reach, spreading the reputation of poets and Rome alike as connoisseurs of refinement.

wear this world out to the ending doom. / So, till the judgment that yourself arise, / You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.” This sonnet bears more than a passing resemblance to the ones Ovid writes to his wife during his exile.

⁶² *Evagoras* §73, cited in a footnote above.

1.5 CONCLUSION

Isocrates extends Athenian fame and glory by means of the highly finished language of his *logos politikos*, but the genre and its conventional philoponic rhetoric do not die with him. He champions an aestheticized politics that arises again in mid-first century BCE Rome and stays with it until at least the second century CE. Isocrates' contemporary Alcidamas faults poet-like graphic rhetors who show overmuch "*meletê tou graphein*" (care for the written, §15 and §26), but that phenomenon of corpus care and its poetic practitioners are precisely what and who I study in the next three chapters.

CHAPTER 2 – RUBBED THE RIGHT WAY: THE PLEASURES OF ABRASIVE POETICS IN CATULLUS

For all the fuss about Republican orality, the *stilus* makes the man. An overestimation of the mouth not only leaves other rhetorical outlets unstudied, it also risks an incomplete understanding of the formation of compositions worthy of a public airing: be they spoken or written, written in prose or in verse. The *stilus*—one end a point for piercing a wax tablet, the other a flat paddle for rubbing out mistakes and infelicities—and its compliant partner, the wax tablet, make ideal tools for tinkering with the shapes and speeds of sentences. A tool of play, practice, impermanence, and erasure, a *stilus* occupies the hand long before the *calamus*, a sharpened reed to be dipped in ink for writing on papyrus. The distinction is important.

Cicero, for one, repeatedly recognizes writing exercises as an indispensable enabler of that ready eloquence through which *res publica* (public matters) and private affairs are negotiated with energy and elegance. His three-book-roll corpus *De Oratore* (55 BCE) purports to flash back to a series of conversations undertaken by the foremost orators of the start of that century on the ideal of the *orator perfectus*. Cicero presents his personal interest in and position on stylistic refinement early on, telling his brother Quintus, the named recipient of the corpus, that *De Oratore* is a “more polished” (*politius*) and “more perfect” (*perfectiusque*) treatment about oratory than the “unfinished and rough” (*inchoata ac rudia*) one that had “slipped out” from his student notebook years before, i.e., the mewling preemie, *De Inventione* (1.5).¹ Moreover, *De Oratore* is largely motivated by their brotherly disagreement about what

¹ All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

combination of available rhetorical resources gives rise to eloquence. That Cicero admittedly leans heavily toward *ars* and the refinements of learning (1.5) prepares readers to expect a display of what Crassus, Antonius, Cotta, and their distinguished friends have to say about writing.

Above all, Crassus and Antonius credit the *stilus*' filing,² even grazing,³ effect on overgrown *oratio*, and Crassus acknowledges that the prospect of wearing down one's prose does seem exhausting (*laboris...videtur*). It is, however, necessary for the achievement of the sort of pleasing oratorical rhythm to which all ears surrender. Orators need not—indeed *should* not—bind themselves to the metrical strictures of poetry, but instead should strive to produce “*oratio* that does not droop or wander, stand still in the middle, or run along too far, but whose *membra* (limbs) are distinct and phrases have closure” (3.190). Painstaking practice with the *stilus*, Crassus assures, eventually leads to the impressive improvisational control of one's linguistic limbs in live debate. Cicero's conversationalists compliment the “filed” (*limatus*) aesthetic throughout all three books, admiring in particular its compactness (e.g., *pressior* (more pressed/succinct) at 2.96).⁴ Meanwhile, they also gush about oratorical polish (from *polio*,

² Crassus at *De Oratore* 3.190: significance of the *stilus* for “*ornat et limat*” (ornamenting and filing).

³ Marcus Antonius at *De Oratore* 2.96: “now and then, and in imitation of what countrymen (*rustici*) often say about grass when it's plentifully abundant,” luxurious *oratio* “should be grazed on by the *stilus* (*stilo depascenda est*).” So far as I can tell, this is the only comparison of the *stilus* to a sheep in all of antiquity.

⁴ *Ars* can file (*limare possit*) even the best speech, and less able speakers can be “corrected” (*corrigi*) by *ars*, but there are some men “either so tongue-tied, or so discordant in tone, or so wild and boorish in feature and gesture, that, even though sound in talent and in *ars*, they yet cannot enter the ranks of the orators” (Crassus, 1.115; Loeb trans.); Scaevola boasted the most filed and refined/finely woven speech of his day (*oratione maxime limatus atque subtilis*; Crassus 1.180); though both are exemplary, Cotta's “*limatus alter et subtilis*” speech is very different from that which results from Sulpicius' great power and vehemence of spirit (Crassus, 3.31); Isocrates helped his student Theopompus file down (*limavit*) his natural exuberance (Crassus, 3.36); and the already cited 3.190.

polire: to smooth),⁵ it too an indicator of writerly rigor. Their praise for writing and editing proves more than begrudging.

In his *rhethorica* of 46 BCE, *Brutus*, Cicero praises Demosthenes' style as *limatius* (more filed) than other Athenian rhetors (§35), no doubt a result of his notorious fondness for writing. Later, on the topic of writing up one's speeches for publication, Cicero credits those orators who have a *limatius* (more filed) approach to all rhetorical activities with being better able to recapture their *oratio* with the *stilus* than those who draw their rhetorical force primarily from emotions conjured by and during speaking itself (§91). Because the publication of a text keeps one's oratorical accomplishments in the air and influences the next generation of orators, it is a vital step in the rhetorical process.⁶ At the end of *Brutus*, Cicero ventures measured autobiographical details about his own reliance on the *stilus* (§312-322), obliging Brutus' wish to know "*totum me*" (the whole me) down to his bodily particulars (*corpore omni*, 313) from his earliest days of his *vita eloquentiae*. At the start, he used to bring into court speeches he had "diligently worked out and composed by lamplight" (*diligenter elaboratas et tamquam elucubratas*, §312) and proceed to orate them without vocal variety, straining his voice and his body (§313), much to the worry of his friends and physicians. Alterations are in order. Having gone abroad to subject himself to the rhetorical regimens of various speech teachers known for trimming back surplus and beefing up substance, Cicero returned to Rome after two years, "*non modo exercitior sed prope mutatus*" (not only better trained, but nearly transformed, §316), both his body and speech better defined for the unrelenting demands of public speaking. Cicero

⁵ Polish (variants of *polio*) in Book 1: 5 (already cited), 31, 63, 243; 2: 72, 95, 154, 236; 3: 79, 80, 96, 135, 184. Variants of *expolio*: 2.40, 3.39, 3.139. I return to some of these items below.

⁶ For more on Cicero's stress on the vital import of circulating speeches in written form, see John Dugan, *Making a New Man: Ciceronian Self-Fashioning in the Rhetorical Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), chapters 3 and 4.

credits his ceaseless exercises (*exercitationis*), especially with the *stilus*, with imparting to his *oratio* an exquisiteness (*exquisitius*) well beyond the prevailing (*vulgare*) standards of speech. When added to his tirelessness (*assiduitatem*) and industry (*industriam*) in pleading cases, his speech grabbed ears with its attention-turning novelty (*animos hominum ad me dicendi novitate converteram*, *Brutus* §321). As in *De Oratore*, polish emerges again and again as the distinguishing quality of superior speech, signifying articulation, discrimination, sophistication.⁷ And laborious editing.

Corpus care finds ready enough appreciation in Cicero's *rhētorica* of 55 and 46 BCE, but it is in the poetic *libellus* (little book-roll) of Gaius Valerius Catullus (84 – c. 54 BCE) that editorial treatment is carried out as if under the reader's nose. Catullus takes and, he argues, gives pleasure in editing and boldly confronts poets who do not. Though a smattering of textual evidence suggests Cicero and Catullus were mutually unimpressed with one another,⁸ they both identify editing as a major contributor to rhetorical refinement in the Republic. Their respect for and reliance on the point *and* the paddle of the *stilus* sits at the nub of the abundant overlap scholars have noticed in their evaluative vocabularies and even stylistic preferences. For example, on the basis of a network of terms—such as, *aridus* (dry), *politus* (polished), *urbanus* (urbane), and *elegans* (elegant)—to which Cicero and Catullus give prominence, William Batstone advocates they be considered as participants in a large-scale “cultural contest” in the

⁷ In his *Orator*, his other *rhētorica* from 46 BCE, Cicero elaborates yet more on polish.

⁸ For a brief sketch of it, see W. R. Johnson's entry on “Neoteric Poetics” in *A Companion to Catullus*, ed. Marilyn B Skinner (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 175-189. That Cicero names Catullus' close buddy Calvus—with whom Catullus pals around in cc. 14, 50, 53, 96—as one of his oratorical contenders in the *Brutus* is not solid evidence that Cicero and Catullus were at interpersonal or even necessarily stylistic odds. Even Catullus c. 49, addressed to Cicero, is devilishly ambiguous. Sarah Culpepper Stroup, in *Catullus, Cicero, and a Society of Patrons: The Generation of the Text* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), makes great strides in considering the similarities between the two from the perspective of literary culture in late Republican Rome. She does not, however, focus on editing.

mid-century over “style in its broadest sense”.⁹ Similarly, Brian Krostenko has traced in Catullus and Cicero a “body”¹⁰ of words—namely, *elegan(s)*, *venust(us)*, *bellus*, *facet(us)*, and *lepid(us)*—that crisscross bodily and verbal comportment and tie them in mutual expectation,¹¹ a lexicon that both reflects on and contributes to the “elite aestheticism”¹² of the period. My focus on editing highlights the material side of this pursuit of polish, a dimension that has left a trace of itself in texts whose editing-begotten elegance in no way hurt their chances of survival.

In his oratorical glory days, Cicero relied on writing to help him temper his natural exuberance and organize his considerable learning before speaking, and to publish his speaking notes after. As the *fora* of oratory to which he’s accustomed close up, writing becomes Cicero’s way of continuing to wield influence over public events. Catullus, though, anticipated Cicero’s retreat from traditional public service by several years. Whereas the threat of danger necessitated Cicero retire, disgust turned Catullus away. In his *libellus*, he complains of walking along in the forum and being asked how much money he extracted from the natives during his tenure of public service in Bithynia (c. 10); entertains suicidal thoughts after reflecting on the lousy character of two holders of high political office (c. 52); and, as I will explain in a moment, does not shy away from directly challenging the most powerful men in Rome. Far from being an apolitical poet, Catullus is so sensitively attuned to the inner-workings of late Republican politics and policies as to be sickened by them.

⁹ William Batstone, “Dry Pumice and the Programmatic Language of Catullus 1,” *Classical Philology* 93 (1998): 13, f.n. 32.

¹⁰ Krostenko, *Cicero, Catullus, and the Language of Social Performance*, 21; elegant, lovely (arousingly so, as it’s etymologically related to Venus), beautiful, witty, and bright. I will use these translations throughout this chapter.

¹¹ Writing, however, can muddle the matter considerably, if, for instance, one cannot write as one speaks, a problem Cicero attributes to several of Rome’s early orators in *Brutus* and *Orator*, and that Catullus attributes to Sufferus in c. 22. Krostenko does not address this possible hiccup.

¹² Krostenko, *Cicero, Catullus, and the Language of Social Performance*, 22.

Unlike Horace and Ovid, Catullus has no image-sensitive autocrat to appease. Though the first triumvirate—composed of Caesar, Crassus, and Pompey—is in place by 59 BCE, Catullus does not bow and scrape to it. Poetic standards for Catullus do not pertain to the political projects of a singular man who elides his interests with an ever-expanding Rome’s; rather, at issue is a writer’s reputation with and respectability among Rome’s most learned and sophisticated readers. In addition to a mocking, mannish nod to big Caesar’s “*monumenta*” of militaristic domination (c. 11.10),¹³ a hostile criticism of Caesar’s choice of associates (c. 29), and attention to his sexual proclivities (c. 57), Catullus issues a dismissive elegiac couplet that is a poem unto itself (c. 93). “I have no desire whatsoever, Caesar, to want to please you, / or to know whether you are a white or a black man”, Catullus announces in c. 93, caring so hyperbolically little to engage Caesar that he does not even wonder about a basic (and not too difficult to discover) bodily characteristic.¹⁴ Catullus, unlike Cicero, does not tremble at the eventual dismantler of the Republic.

As through Rome itself, all manner of corpora slink and shuffle through Catullus’ *libellus*, and book-rolls and bodies occasionally share adjectives. Agathon, as we saw in the previous chapter, alleges a concordance between textual and human *sômata*, and Isocrates between speech and souls. Twice in his *Brutus*, Cicero notes the correspondence between a

¹³ For the sexual undertones of this poem, see Phyllis Young Forsyth, “The Thematic Unity of Catullus 11,” *The Classical World* 84.6 (July-August 1991): 457-464, especially 461, where she contends that Catullus is contemptuously crediting Caesar for his prowess at penetrating foreign places and people so as to set up Lesbia as a “deflowerer” of men (463).

¹⁴ Suetonius records that Caesar had no hard feelings and even invited Catullus over for dinner as a show of his appreciation for the poet’s skill (Jul. 73). The relationship between Caesar and Catullus in Thornton Wilder’s short work *The Ides of March: A Novel* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2003 [1948]) grows out of Suetonius’ account.

given orator's lifestyle and his speech.¹⁵ Catullan depictions of written corpora contain clear valuations of the quality and worth of their authors—whether he describes his own or someone else's—and he turns his repeated detection of their errors into opportunities to exhibit his assets. It is through his elegant verses, after all, that he pokes fun at their inelegant ones. He details his willingness to work (c. 50.14), to put forth only the refined (c. 1.1-2), and to keep all else under wraps until he can give them ample editorial attention; his hendecasyllabic assault against the “*moecha putida*” (rotten slut) who filched his wax tablets likely represents an attempt to lock down his rough drafts (c. 42).¹⁶ Catullus elbows in on the mass of corpora rolling around in Rome—including Cicero's growing “*turbam voluminum*” (crowd of volumes, *Brutus* §123)—and stakes a claim for what I call his *abrasive poetics*, as much or more a counterpart to the filed oratory championed by Cicero as a Roman resurgence of Callimachean ideals.¹⁷ The harshness

¹⁵ At §117, Cicero describes the Stoic speaker Quintus Aelius Tubero as “hard, crude, and rough in life as in speech” (*ut vita sic oratione durus incultus horridus*). At §132, Cicero describes Quintus Catullus (one of the *De Oratore* conversationalists) as having a natural way about him “not only in life...but also in speech” (*non vitae solum...sed orationis*).

¹⁶ As suggested by L. Roman, “A History of Lost Tablets,” *Classical Antiquity* 25.2 (October 2006): 355, and Joseph Farrell, “The Impermanent Text in Catullus and Other Roman Poets,” in *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*, ed. W. A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 173.

¹⁷ One would be hard-pressed to find a classics scholar who did not consider many key aspects of Catullus' poetics indicative of his allegiance to the aesthetics of Callimachus (c. 310 – 240 BCE), an Alexandrian poet of lithe hymns and epigrams. According to advocates of this influence, Callimachus' most impactful lines are the mantra “big book, big evil” (*mega biblion, mega kakon*) and the imperatives to “foster a slender Muse” (*tên Moûsan d' ôgathe leptaleên*) and “abhor all common things.” We see Callimachus' imprint in the diminutive nouns through which Catullus hails his works' slimness (*libellus*, little book, and *versiculus*, little verse, c. 16.6 and 50.4), in the adjectives that suggest peeled away layers or polished surfaces (such as *lepidus*, bright, and *expolito*, thorough polish), and in the overall abrasiveness of his poetics. In addition to those telling word choices, Catullus plainly names or alludes to Callimachus on two occasions (c. 65.16 and 116.2). Callimachus' *leptos* (husked, slender, refined) poems are smooth precursors to Catullus' pumiced poetic *libellus*, but all this telling evidence should not foreclose efforts to read Catullus poetic choices as resonantly Roman and, in the bigger scheme of things, part of a rhetorical battle of dainty versus hefty that dates back to Aristophanes' *Frogs*. See Peter Knox, “Catullus and Callimachus,” in *A Companion to Catullus*, 151-171, for more. See also: A.

of Catullus' abrasive poetics has two facets: his rough treatment of his own little poetry book—pumiced inside and out (c. 1.1-2) and worn-out from work (50.14-15)—and his gruff attitude toward poets of his generation (*saecli*, c. 14.23) who do not finish their verses (cc. 14, 22, 36, 95).¹⁸

Seeming to have circulated certain poems before issuing the collection we currently and cautiously call “the” *libellus* (little book-roll, c. 1.1),¹⁹ Catullus responds to readers who take the smooth products of his abrasive poetics as evidence of softness (“*mollitia*”; cf. c. 16).

Throughout his corpus we are reminded that in a rhetorical culture where, by his own assessment, “*expolitum*” (thoroughly polished) describes both a book-roll made smooth by pumice applications and teeth made gleaming by repeated piss scrubblings—readers, you’ll soon see what I mean—there might be such a thing as caring too much. In this chapter, I use materials from within many of the poems I have already cited to frame Catullan reception preparations as both creative of and reactive to the aesthetics of friction—of competitive contact, interactive shoulder-rubbing, and scrubbed texts—through which public speakers and writers regulate self-

M. Keith, “Slender Verse: Roman Elegy and Ancient Rhetorical Theory,” *Mnemosyne* 52.1 (1999): 41-62; Batstone, “Dry Pumice”; and John Dugan, “Preventing Ciceronianism: C. Licinius Calvus’ Regimens for Sexual and Oratorical Self-Mastery,” *Classical Philology* 96.4 (October 2001): 400-428. All shift attention away from Callimachus’ influence and toward the Roman rhetorical context of poets like Catullus and Horace.

¹⁸ I have excluded the lovely c. 35 precisely because it is so. For an interpretation of this poem in keeping with the spirit of this chapter, see E. A. Fredricksmeyer, “Catullus to Caecilius on Good Poetry (C. 35),” *The American Journal of Philology* 106. 2 (Summer 1985): 213-221.

¹⁹ One major problem is the size of the so-called *libellus*: 2,300 lines, far too many to fit on one papyrus roll (*liber*), let alone a little *liber*. See T. P. Wiseman, *Clio’s Cosmetics: Three Studies in Greco-Roman Literature* (Leicester University, 1979), chapter 12, and Marilyn B. Skinner, *Catullus’ Passer: The Arrangement of the Book of Polymetric Poems* (Salem, NH: The Ayer Company, 1981), chapter 1, for more on the textual tradition and educated guesses about the form and format of the corpus. Skinner’s book is Catullan in its compactness and cleverness.

representation in the Republic.²⁰ Whereas Cicero’s abrasive tool of choice is the metaphorical file (*lima*), Catullus favors the pumice stone (*pumex*).²¹ Rather than to embark on a comparison of the two men’s views on editing, I aim to cast Catullus as a rhetorical figure who operates in poetry but is no less concerned with standards of public verbal comportment—especially as evidenced in publically available texts—than those people we more commonly think of as arbiters of communal discursive norms, the orators. Throughout his *libellus*, full of evaluations of public book-rolls, even his own, Catullus reads others—literally and figuratively—and through his readings regulates the look and sound of Roman refinement.²²

2.1 PROGRAMMATIC AND PROBLEMATIC PUMICE (c. 1, c. 16)

To whom do I give this bright new little book-roll / just now polished thoroughly with dry pumice? ...

Cui dono lepidum novum libellum / arido/a²³ modo pumice expolitum? ... (c. 1.1-2)

In *Orality and Literacy*, Walter Ong describes the “new world” of the printing press as a clatteringly typographic place wherein “the book was less an utterance, and more like a thing.”²⁴

²⁰ Technically, it’s the *late* Republic, but of course that is our dating frame and not theirs.

Catullus, for one, did not live to see it topple into tyranny, dying as he did even before Crassus.

²¹ The possible significance of their respective editing metaphors does not concern me here, but I will look into it further in a future iteration of this project.

²² As William Batstone has argued, orators are not the only group of “contestants compet[ing] simultaneously for personal influence and for their own symbolic and rhetorical definition of Rome” (544). See William Batstone, “Literature,” in *Blackwell Companion to the Roman Republic*, ed. Nathan Rosenstein and Robert Morstein-Marx (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2010), 543-564. Joy Connolly, too, joins Catullus with Cicero via the nexus of terms Krostenko identified (179, 181), arguing that “no simple opposition exists between the fashionings of the self in Roman poetry and in Roman politics” (185). See Joy Connolly, *The State of Speech: Rhetoric and Political Thought in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

²³ The potentially and, if so, famously gender-bending adjective will not occupy me here, but see Anthony Corbeill, “*Genus quid est?* Roman Scholars on Grammatical Gender and Biological Sex,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 138 (2008): 89-9, for more on this issue.

²⁴ Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 123.

Yet, in this introductory poem, written in a galaxy far, far away from Gutenberg's, Catullus establishes his *libellus* as a physical object with thingly traits: it is small, smart-looking, and smooth. It has long been the scholarly consensus, though, that the adjectives Catullus uses in lines 1-2 apply not only to his little book-roll, but also to his poems and to the aesthetic attitude that animates them. This poem of presentation, therefore, operates "programmatically", meaning it announces poetic values whose influence exceeds the bounds of this particular poem.²⁵

William Batstone, the popularizer of the term "programmatic" for ancient literary forms, contends (though with little resistance from Catullus or fellow classicists) that the adjectives in c. 1.1-2 harmonize to refer "to both objective, external aspects of preparing the literal papyrus and, by metonymy [sic], to the metaphorical, programmatic, and internal qualities of the poetry."²⁶ Because of the poem's important programmatic function, I will consider its opening adjectives as they pertain to three interrelated elements to which Catullus returns throughout his *libellus*: literary materiality, poetic quality, and Roman refinement.

Literary Materiality

Catullus' so-called *libellus* joins many literary objects represented in his poems, such as: other little book-rolls (c. 14.12, 55.5), scroll cases (publically accessible ones of a bookseller: 14.18; private ones of his own 68.36), full-size book-rolls (22.6, 44.21), book-roll parts (22.5-8), papyrus (1.6, 35.2, 36.1, 36.18), wax tablets (42 & 50.2), and writings (36.7, 68.33). This abundant representation of book stuffs (con)textualizes Catullus as fully immersed in the writing

²⁵ See Batstone, "Dry Pumice," and William Bastone, "Catullus and the Programmatic Poem: The Origins, Scope, and Utility of a Concept," in *A Companion to Catullus*, ed. Skinner, 235-253.

²⁶ Batstone, "Dry Pumice", 132.

life and shows Rome to be a texty place.²⁷ C. 1 clues us in to the look of his *little* book (itself a physical attribute), presumably as a means of differentiating it from other *libelli* in the city; a *libellus* could be anything from a financial record or legal petition, to a leaflet or advertisement.²⁸ Catullus' is *lepidum*, bright, as if scrubbed to shining; *novum*, new, nothing old or recycled here; and *arido/a modo pumice expolitum*, just now thoroughly polished with dry pumice—the best kind for smoothing out the fibrous edges of papyrus—as only a formal piece of writing would be. Catullus does not want his *libellus* to be mistaken for a discardable piece of ephemera. But the dry *pumex* represents yet another layer of the physical work of preparing verses for others: scratching out rough lines in drafts undertaken on scraps of palimpsest (from the Greek *palimpsêstos*, scraped again).²⁹ Catullus presents his editorial body early on in his relationship with the reader.

In Gutenbergian terms, the *libellus* is hot off the presses. Unlike products of the press, however, pre-modern book-rolls lack uniformity of appearance: formatting, handwriting, and even scribal blunders are idiosyncratic to each copy. Further, as Joseph Farrell points out, no book-roll worth reading stays tidy for long: grubby hands stain it, eager unrolling rips it, wine soaks through it, and, after very long, bugs nibble it. As it is rolled and unrolled, a jarring gap

²⁷ “Textual materiality,” Farrell avers, is a “major theme of [Catullus’] poetry” (“The Impermanent Text,” 169).

²⁸ Stroup argues that *libellus* is a functional designation rather than a physical one, an indication of publication anxiety by elite Romans (e.g., 101ff), but I am not altogether convinced. The textual format of *libellus* lives on: “Yes, already I personify the object, the little book, the *libellus*, this creature to which I am giving life and which seems at once to have a will of its own. It wants to live, it wants to survive.” Iris Murdoch, *The Sea, The Sea* (New York: Penguin, 2001), 2.

²⁹ Catullus represents himself in the *libellus* as drafting on wax tablets (c. 42 and 50), perhaps to preserve papyrus as the medium of polished finality, to indicate the smallness of his verses, and the quickness of his editing. Palimpsest features in c. 22, but seemingly for its drafting usefulness to poets who write thousands of lines.

opens between the *libellus*' flashy adjectives and its increasingly tattered appearance.³⁰ The state of the little book-roll Catullus describes is an ephemeral one for the original edition, but it is not without possibility of renewal; if it gets along well with readers, it begets more and more copies of itself, each one bright, new, and pumiced. And book-rolls not worth reading? Catullus himself acknowledges that they often end up as "loose tunics for mackerels" (c. 95), much as yesterday's newspapers dress fish and chips in the present-day Atlantic isles. He also mentions teasing one's sophisticated friends with bad book-rolls (c. 14) and throwing nasty pages into the fire (c. 36).

Poetic Quality & Roman Refinement

When we move beyond a literal consideration of the adjectives and to a literary one, we see Catullus' poetic creed take form. As Krostenko convincingly demonstrates, *lepid(us)* ranks as a foremost word in Cicero and Catullus' evaluative lexicon, meaning they both apply it approvingly to the words and behaviors of others in their lofty social circle. *Lepidum* thus pertains also to the *libellus*' verbal contents; they are, Catullus asserts, bright in the sense of dazzlingly clever or flashily brilliant. *Novum* means not stale, maybe even unprecedented, fresh; Cicero (snidely?) called Catullus and his ilk "*poetae novi*" (*Orator* §161). Novelty alone does not, however, achieve the desired aesthetic. "*Arido/a modo pumice expolitum*" refers to the physical acts of tidying a text, but also to the resultant polish of the verses, the *sine qua non* of concerns for Catullus (cf. c. 22, treated below). As I showed in the introduction and referred to above, "*arido/a*" (dry) is a key term in the stylistic debates in which Catullus and Cicero, among others, participate, and that Catullus does not use this adjective to describe *pumex* the only other time he uses it in the *libellus* is good evidence of its programmatic function for his own poems

³⁰ Farrell, "The Impermanent Text", 166-168.

(again, c. 22). Indicative of both error and excess having been scrubbed away, the adjectival combination promises poems that are the antithesis of dull.

Probably the most well-known appearance of *lepidus* in either poet or politico occurs in this opening poem and near an aesthetic word not included in Krostenko's lexicon. That word is *expoliturum*, an adjective evocative of buffing and scrubbing, smoothing and slicking, its prefix leaving no doubt about it. Catullus uses this index of sophistication in only one other poem, c. 39.20, in which he inveighs³¹ against an off-putting mannerism of a Spanish immigrant to Rome, one Egnatius. Deemed by Catullus two poems earlier as representative of a whole contingent of long-haired, puny, back-alley adulterers (37.16-17), Egnatius also boasts a bushy beard and "teeth scrubbed with Spanish piss" (*dens Hiberna defricatus urina*, 37.20). It is this last feature on which Catullus dwells in c. 39. Egnatius flashes his *candidos dentes* (white teeth, 1) during teary oratorical moments in court and gut-wrenching displays of maternal grief at funerals, which Catullus explains would be "*neque elegantem neque urbanum*" (neither elegant nor urbane, 8) even if he were "an urbanite [that is, from Rome] or a Sabine or a Tiburtine or a thick (*pinguis*) Umbrian or sloppy (*obesus*) Etruscan or a black and toothy Lanuvian or a Transpadane, to touch on my people, too"(10-14)—all of whom tend to their oral hygiene in more tasteful ways (15).³²

Two adjectives in that list, which leads off with an insider group (Romans) and then moves to outsider groups (Catullus' own included), wedge the urban/rural divide by making

³¹ Invective is a rhetorical form tightly embraced by the Romans. As W. Jeffrey Tatum asserts in "Social Commentary and Political Invective" in *A Companion to Catullus*, "Catullan invective has much in common with the practices of oratory" (337). It's a moralizing mode of "calling out on." In his article, "*Arbitria Urbanitatis*: Language, Style, and Characterization in Catullus cc. 39 and 37," *Classical Antiquity* 20.2 (October 2001), Brian Krostenko argues that Catullus has "carefully calibrated" his persona "to suggest the tone of an orator and eventually a dignified and decorous gentleman" (240).

³² Non-Romans may overcompensate; perhaps Catullus is wary of that on his own behalf, as he is not native to Rome.

noticeable certain differences between their respective inhabitants.³³ The *pinguis* quality of the Umbrians could point to heaviness of accent and/or stockiness of body, whereas the *obesus* quality of the Etruscans could indicate their bodily fullness and/or their overall coarseness. Both adjectives stand in heavy contrast to city sharpness and concision, but no one, no matter his origins and regimens, will be thought “good” (*boni*, 9) who smiles at inappropriate times. Catullus, continuing to play anthropologist, tells readers that it is a custom of Celtiberians, of which Egnatius is one, to scrub (*defricare*, 19) their teeth and gums each morning with urine they have stored the night before. Therefore, the more thoroughly polished (*expolitior*, 20) Egnatius’ teeth are, the more piss he has had in his mouth. Describing both his *libellus* and the pee-bleached teeth of an ever-smiling aspirant to urbane elegance as *expolitus*, Catullus acknowledges the rhetorical challenge of revealing and reveling in corpus care.

A bright book, like a bright smile, can draw the wrong kind of attention to itself, but worse still, by the metrics of Catullus and select members of his coterie, are poets who pay too little attention to what they send out into Rome. For instance, Catullus describes the poetic papers of the verbose Volusius as *cacata carta*, “shitty sheets” (c. 36.1 and 36.18; see below). This lavatorial language accords with the tendency of a range of “Roman writers [to] play on the coincidence of the language of the toilette with that of literary polish”,³⁴ or, in this case, the language of the toilet and the messy lack of literary polish. To attract the right sort of people, an inhabitant of Rome must signal refinement in word and appearance. Corpus care courts cultured Romans, like the *bella puella* (beautiful girl) who’s put off my mere rumors of a man’s goaty armpits (c. 69.6). This reaction to an unkempt human corpus parallels the reception situation for

³³ Ramage, *Urbanitas*, 75: “*Pingue*, then, and *peregrinum* are to be taken as opposites of *presse*, *aequabiliter*, and *leniter*, which Cicero uses to describe the urban accent.”

³⁴ William Fitzgerald, *Catullan Provocations: Lyric Poetry and the Drama of Position* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 41.

an untidy textual one: rejection by people with high standards. No other kind of reader interests Catullus.

As I alluded above, Cicero uses *polit(us)* words throughout all three books of his *De Oratore*, often in the superlative and sometimes with the *ex-* prefix. The distinguished conversationalists discuss such things as the pleasure of ornate and polished speech (1.31), the social benefits of the humor of a polished man (2.236), and the oratorical polish brought on by philosophical inspection (3.79) and the reading of other orators and poets (3.39). Though polish ties lexically to *polis* only by virtue (or vice) of fanciful etymology, polish is an urbane quality related to aesthetic pleasure, sociality, and being well and widely read, which, of course, harkens back to literary materiality.

2.2 SOFT VERSES, HARD PERSUASION

“The pleasure of the text is not necessarily of a triumphant, heroic, muscular type.”
Roland Barthes *The Pleasure of the Text*, 18

Among other things, Catullus’ svelte poetry collection scratches or even creates an itch for a slim, smooth, scrubbed-down corpus lacking the coarse and the callous. Indeed, Catullus uses the language of a sexual itch to describe his dainty poetry’s moving effect (c. 16.7-11). His little book-roll, a medium often situated on the lap, arouses something more than just interest, and that makes some readers uncomfortable with his—and likely their own—masculinity. William Fitzgerald has argued that interpretive scratching at this sexual itch may offer the “key to Catullan poetics”³⁵ and its “teasing sexuality that is provocatively feminine”³⁶, particularly in its reliance on *pumex*, that indispensable editorial tool and metaphor. As I related in the

³⁵ Fitzgerald, *Catullan Provocations*, 34.

³⁶ Fitzgerald, *Catullan Provocations*, 41.

introduction, *pumex* was also a utensil that ladies with a remarkable tolerance for discomfort used to rub off hair from their armpits and legs, a procedure Ovid admonished manly men to avoid. To whomever they are attached, pumiced legs advertize sexual availability to men. One type of male smoothie is the “*puer delicatus*,” a boyish sexual pet who is either a slave or a prostitute (in antiquity, slaves had to submit to the sexual demands of their masters or masters’ guests) who, sexually, plays the woman’s role. And Amy Richlin suggests that Catullus, having pumiced it to be touchable and desirable, “pimps his book”.³⁷ According to those readings, Catullus’ transactions with the reader resemble a sexual encounter in which he is either the passive partner or of which he is the unscrupulous organizer.³⁸

In the *Thesmophorizusae*, Aristophanes associates Agathon’s feminine hairlessness with his smooth verses by means of the razors so readily available in his poetic workshop, and Mnesilochus wonders whether Agathon even has a penis (*poû peos?* 142). Moreover, in Plato’s *Symposium* Agathon lounges lustily at one point of a homoerotic love triangle with Socrates and Alcibiades. Due to this same metonymic dynamic between poems and their poet, Catullus’ *pumex* conjures questions about the look and behavior of his body. *C.* 16 purports to be Catullus’ prickly reaction to a representative attempt to evince his personal particulars from his poetry.

I will stuff your asshole and your mouth, / Aurelius the pussy and the ass-wiggler Furius, / who think me, based on my little verses, / which are a little smooth, too little shameful. / For while it is decorous for a pious poet to be chaste, [5] / it is in no way necessary for his little verses to be, / which only have wit and charm / if they are a little smooth and having little shame / and able to stimulate through itching / not, I mean, boys, but those hairy ones [10], / who are unable to move their stiff loins. / You two, because of the

³⁷ See Amy Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor. Revised Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 162. See also Trevor Fear, “The Poet as Pimp: Elegaic Seduction in the Time of Augustus,” *Arethusa* 33.2 (2000): 217-240.

³⁸ The very short *c.* 106—*Cum puero bello praeconem qui videt esse, / quid credat, nisi se vendere discupere?*—seems suggestive also of the state and fate of book-rolls.

many thousands of kisses / that you read about, think me insufficiently manly? / I will stuff your asshole and your mouth.

Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo, / Aureli pathice at cinaede Furi, / qui me ex versiculis meis putastis, / quod sunt molliculi, parum pudicum. / Nam castum esse decet pium poetam [5] / ipsum, versiculos nihil necesse est, / qui tum denique habent salem ac leporem, / si sint molliculi ac parum pudici, / et quod pruriat incitare possint, / non dico pueris, sed his pilosis [10] / qui duros nequeunt movere lumbos. / Vos, quod milia multa basiorum / legistis, male me marum putatis? / Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo.

Aurelius and Furius, whom Catullus a few poems prior called his “companions” (c. 11.1),³⁹ had, perhaps by virtue of their closeness to him, been able to read (*legistis*) his poems before he offered them to the greater readership of Rome as the *libellus*. Perhaps he even sought their feedback, perhaps not, but they provided it. They think (*putastis*, 3; *putatis*, 13) Catullus’ admittedly tiny and dainty verses an index of Catullus’ lack of shame, modesty, and masculinity,⁴⁰ and his response to the this line of thinking complicates the ethical-aesthetic premise/promise repeated by orators that a man speaks and writes as he lives. Catullus seems, however, more concerned with defending his aesthetic choices than with explaining away the character Aurelius and Furius “think” must be responsible for them.

In answer to their critical assessments, Catullus threatens to assert—insert—his manhood, forcing it into the front of Aurelius and the back of Furius. Alongside shock at this horrific violence, modern readers might also register confusion: can an ancient Roman who jams himself into the orifices of other men do so in the name of masculinity? As T. P. Wiseman, among others, has clarified: “The ancients evidently did not find it helpful to categorise sexual activity according to the sex of the person with whom it is performed. What mattered to them was the question of active or passive, of penetrating or being penetrated.”⁴¹ Catullus’ threats of

³⁹ They also feature in cc. 15, 21, 23, 24, and 26, either one or the other.

⁴⁰ For more on softness as an inversion or perversion of masculinity, see chapter 2 (“*Mollitia*: Reading the Body”) of Catherine Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁴¹ T. P. Wiseman, *Catullus and His World: A Reappraisal* (New York: Cambridge

penetration position him as thoroughly masculine. Like Mnesilochus, who turns to Agathon's poetic "limbs" (*toû melous*) to find out what sort of genitalia the poet possesses (*Thesmophorizusae*, 144), Aurelius and Furius here find out what Catullus is working with, if they had any doubt.

In lines 5-6, however, a different side of Catullus seems to emerge. While it is "decorous" (*deceat*) for a "pious poet" to behave himself, his little verses need not. What constitutes poetic piety? And is Catullus identifying himself with this prim and proper poet?⁴² Let's keep reading. At the center of this poem, structurally (line 7 of 14) and programmatically, is *leporem*—the non-diminutive and noun form of *lepid(us)*, which figured so prominently in c. 1—and *salem* (salt, wit). A seemingly unavoidable effect of verses endowed with the qualities Catullus esteems is stimulation as involuntary as an itch. The smoothness and softness (*molliculi*) of Catullus' dainty verses excite even the *duros lumbos* of hairy men, once thought beyond movement.

Just what does Catullus credit himself with being able to incite and move (*incitare*, 9; *movere*, 11) and what of it? On this first question, there seem to be two separate but equally pelvic camps: one, that Catullus' verses cause erections in old hairy men who seemed impotent,⁴³ and two, that his verses induce bum shaking in old hairy men who in their youths were hairless pathics.⁴⁴ Instead of on the rear, I'd like to focus on the ear (sort of) by considering the *lumbus*

University Press, 1985), 10. See also Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus*, chapters 3 and 6.

⁴² *Castum* could mean pure, free from crime, or unblemished, and might contrast with the description of bad poets as "impious" in c. 14. It's also possible that Catullus is here sarcastically referring to the poet as *vates* (priest) topos.

⁴³ See Skinner's Passer and Richlin's *The Garden of Priapus*, for instance.

⁴⁴ See: Daniel Selden, "Ceveat Lector: Catullus and the Rhetoric of Performance," in *Innovations of Antiquity*, ed. Ralph Hexter and Daniel Selden (New York: Routledge,

an organ of rhetorical reception and response. What Catullus here depicts is overcoming rhetorical resistance; “*nequeunt movere*” (11) signifies an inability or unwillingness to budge on a matter. Though “*duros lumbos*” is unique to Catullus, both Horace and Ovid describe the power of words to soften tough ears.⁴⁵ Grown and hairy men seem rigidly stuck in their poetic preferences—unlike young ones (*pueris*, 10), who tend to favor the new and change their tastes often—but his *novum* verses provoke a reaction resembling pleasure. By locating this movement in the *lumbos* rather than the ears or the mind, Catullus characterizes his rhetorical power as sensual rather than rational. Moreover, the reaction he describes is not altogether voluntary. As Ovid would later boast, albeit in very different circumstances, “*non opus est magnis placido lectore poetis: / quemlibet invitum difficilemque tenent*” (“great poets do not require a placid reader: for they hold even the unwilling and difficult”, *Epistulae Ex Ponto*, 3.4.9-10). The kind of readers Catullus values (even, perhaps, begets against their wills) have no uptight scruples against twitching and tingling (or no choice but to do so) as they fondle his smooth little verses.

Aurelius and Furius are not such readers. They also consider Catullus’ “kisses” evidence of his lack of manly control. They are kisses they have seen Catullus plant on a page, that is, ones they have read about. By the time we come to c. 16, readers of the *libellus* will have encountered two kiss poems, cc. 5 and 7, and their recipient is the notorious Lesbia. But there is another kiss poem further into the book-roll, and in this poem Juventius (a man) receives Catullus’ kisses (c. 48). Whether Aurelius and Furius had read this latter poem is almost beside

1992), wherein the *ceveat* refers to this lower body liteness; Fitzgerald, *Catullan Provocations*, 255, f.n. 36; and James Uden, “Impersonating Priapus,” *American Journal of Philology* 128.1 (Spring 2007): 18.

⁴⁵ See Horace’s *Odes* 3.11, wherein he asks the turtle-shell lyre to “*dic modos*” and “apply” them to the “*obstinatas aures*” of the lady he lusts after, and Ovid’s *Epistulae Ex Ponto* 1.2, where Ovid begs a friend to “*molliat aures*” of Augustus (115) and uses many rhetorical words besides (e.g., *movere*, 113; *facundia lingua*, 67; *flecte*, 118).

the point, as Catullus' problem with his associates is their presumption to privilege *their* responses as readers, to dare to tell Catullus to straighten up, so to speak. He reasserts his dominant position, not letting any reader, however (formerly?) friendly, get on top of him. Despite their suggestions to the contrary, he is the one who penetrates.

In *Phrasikleia: An Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece*, Jesper Svenbro explores what he calls "the pederastic paradigm of writing" in Greek texts, analogizing the writer-reader relationship to that of the *erastês* (the penetrator) and *erômenos* (the penetrated) in sociosexual partnerships. "To write is to be dominant, active, triumphant, as long as one finds a reader prepared to be amenable," he writes, while "[t]o read is to submit to what the writer has written, to be dominated, to occupy the position of the one overcome, to submit to the metaphorical *erastês* in the person of the writer (that is, if one decides to read, for the reader, if he is not a slave, is clearly free to refuse to read)."⁴⁶ The rhetorical rape Catullus enacts in this poem is a response to Aurelius and Furius' resistance to his rhetorical seduction, which is itself a bit unsettling.⁴⁷ As William Fitzgerald recognizes, "[w]hen we give someone a poetic license, we encourage a certain performance of power..." to which we can fall victim.⁴⁸

Because, as the poem itself asserts (but on what hermeneutic grounds can we take it seriously?), a poet is something other than his poems, Catullus the man may not be smooth and soft and may not mean any harm to readers who have undesirable reactions to his poems.

⁴⁶ *Phrasikleia*, 192. Svenbro uses the three speeches on *eros* in Plato's *Phaedrus* to flesh out the pederastic paradigm, and his results remarkably resemble in spirit the reading Richard Weaver proposes in the first chapter of his book *The Ethics of Rhetoric* ("The *Phaedrus* and the Nature of Rhetoric"). John Durham Peters's chapter on the *Phaedrus* in his *Speaking Into the Air* bears the stamp of both Svenbro and Weaver. See, more recently, the collection *Plotting with Eros: Essays on the Poetics of Love and Erotics of Reading* (ed. Nilsson).

⁴⁷ These two rhetorical poses are inspired by Wayne Brockriede, "Arguers as Lovers," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 5.1 (1973): 1-11.

⁴⁸ Fitzgerald, *Catullan Provocations*, 237.

Nevertheless, as Daniel Selden warns, “Aurelius and Furius stand for all future readers of Catullus’ work who, at the very moment they think they have gained some descriptive or evaluative control over the poet, discover that they have simply been ‘fucked over’ by his text.”⁴⁹ It is therefore at great risk of being savaged by Catullus that I continue this chapter at all.

In this section, I first concentrated on the array of adjectives in the first two lines of Catullus *libellus*, pulling apart their material, literary, and cultural layers to demonstrate their programmatic function, and narrowing in on “*expolitum*” as the most potentially problematic qualifier. Then I showed the critical troubles that beset Catullus when his friends judge his aesthetic choices to reflect poorly on his character *and* are unmoved by them (which is worse, because few things are more satisfying than upsetting someone’s moral code and then seeing them blush in a forbidden moment of enjoyment). Rather than bring out his pumice and erase those elements that offend Aurelius and Furius, Catullus sticks up for his sensual verses in more ways than one. Next, I argue that Catullus rhetorically manages time in c. 1 and c. 50 to endow his potentially problematic corpus care with a sense of the here and the now. It is because of and not in spite of their thorough editorial treatment that his verses potentially influence others on matters unfurling in the present, including his talents.

2.3 TIME FOR EDITING: THE KAIROTIC DEICTIC (c. 1, c. 50)

“If a girl looks swell when she meets you, who gives a damn if she’s late? Nobody.”
J. D. Salinger *The Catcher in the Rye*, chapter 17

“And time yet for a hundred indecisions, / And for a hundred visions and revisions.../”
T. S. Eliot “The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock”, lines 32-33

⁴⁹ Selden, “*Caveat Lector*”, 488.

Continual touch-ups must become finishing touches if a text is to circulate and make something of itself. Though Catullus admires his comrade Cinna's nine-year poetic process (*nonam post denique messem ... nonamque edita post hiemam*, c. 95.1-2), his own poems smack of reactive immediacy. His little book-roll is not a cold, chiseled *parvum monumentum* (small monument, cf. 95), but rather a series of fiery rhetorical interactions: setting people straight, begging for relief, struggling for influence.⁵⁰ So, what of "the thorough polish made possible by dry pumice"? How can a book prepared in such a way impinge on communicative matters quickly enough to have any bearing on them? How, to return to Ong's dualism, does Catullus' *libellus* straddle the categories of utterance and thing? And why would poems directed toward specified readers or fast-fading situations be worthy of preservation "*plus uno saeclo*" (beyond one generation, c. 1.10)?

Catullus' representations of corpus care have a complex relationship to time, as erasure and polish tend to take lots of it. At once, Catullan corpus care in cc. 1 and 50 suggests scrupulous editing and truncated editorial time, making his poems seem carefully prepared rather than endlessly fussed over. He manages this impression by using what I call the "kairotic deictic." Considering *kairos* the rhetor's fleeting opportunity to intervene in time-sensitive moments of personal or communal need, Alcidamas, as we saw in the previous chapter, calls rhetors who painstakingly polish their words rather than respond readily (however roughly), poets. Even within poetic circles, though, poets who shave off every rough tuft are both less than the best and less than manly, as we saw with Aristophanes' depiction of the pretty boy Agathon.

⁵⁰ Selden, "*Ceveat Lector*", 482: "The individual poems function less to communicate factual information than as agents of some pragmatic force, so that the collection as a whole reads virtually as a catalogue of different discursive operations: dedication (c. 1), censure (c. 39), advice (c. 69), condolence (c. 96), warning (c. 21), request (c. 27), repudiation (c. 11), greeting (c. 31), apology (c. 65), blessing (c. 61), invitation (c. 35), and so forth."

The *kairos* for Catullus opens in a space between the quick mouth of an orator and the repeatedly razored page of an Agathon.

Deictic comes from the Greek verb *deiknūmi* (to bring to light, display, exhibit) and pertains to what Nancy Felson calls “the ‘pointing out’ and ‘pointing at’ function of language” by which an object or happening becomes sensible by occupying a specified space or time: there, here, this, that, now, yesterday.⁵¹ Epideictic rhetoric, one of oratory’s traditional three civic genres, emerges from the addition of the prefix *epi-* to this “showing forth”. Focusing on Aristotle’s treatment of epideictic in the *Rhetoric*, Ned O’Gorman has argued that showiness is a “function” of any discourse that appeals to the senses, in addition to being a formal rhetorical genre.⁵² *Epideixis* can also refer to a virtuoso “display” of rhetorical agility, as it does at the start of Plato’s *Gorgias* when Socrates expresses (feigned?) regret at having missed Gorgias’ fea(s)t of words (447a) and in the middle of *Protagoras* when Socrates expresses (feigned?) amazement at his interlocutor’s sophistic founding myth (328d).⁵³ *Epideixis* is showy speech.

Kairotic deictics, then, are part of the grammar of presence⁵⁴ that Catullus uses to “show off” his corpus care as having been undertaken, but in a timely manner. The friction of pumice

⁵¹ See Nancy Felson, “Introduction,” *Arethusa* 37 (2004): 255, her introduction to a special issue on the poetic deictic in ancient Greek lyric, especially Pindar.

⁵² Ned O’Gorman, “Aristotle’s *Phantasia* in the *Rhetoric*: *Lexis*, Appearance, and the Epideictic Function of Discourse,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 38.1 (2005): 16-40. See also Jeffrey Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), for more on epideictic as the shared ground of oratory and poetry, and John Dugan, “How to Make (and Break) a Cicero: *Epideixis*, Textuality, and Self-fashioning in the *Pro Archia* and *In Pisonem*,” *Classical Antiquity* 20.1 (April 2001): 35-77, for a lively treatment of how Cicero exploits epideictic’s unique positioning vis-à-vis orality and textuality.

⁵³ Plato uses this word to describe sophistic grandstanding in every sophistic dialogue.

⁵⁴ In her book *Horace’s Narrative Odes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), Michèle Lowrie’s proposes the phrase “poetics of presence” for understanding how Horace’s lyric voice operates and explains it as follows: “What I am calling Horace’s ‘poetics of presence’ is his construction of his poetry as a rhetorical situation in which a speaker (not a writer) addresses an utterance to an addressee in the here and now. The rhetorical construction of Horatian lyric

on a page does not necessarily reduce the rhetorical force of its contents, and a smooth page is not necessarily a soft one. Erasure and polish matter in the larger chronological scheme of things, too, as corpora that have received care “are continually rolled out as generations go grey” (*cana diu saecula pervoluent*, c. 95.6), that is, are deemed worthy of reading again and again. Catullus seems to offer pumice as collateral to the patron virgin (most likely a Muse) at the end of c. 1, as if it is his polish that makes him worth protecting.

To whom do I give this bright new little book-roll (*lepidum novum libellum*) / **just now** polished thoroughly with dry pumice (*arido/a modo pumice expolitum*)? / Cornelius, to you: for you were accustomed / to think my trifles (*nugas*) to be something; / when already even then you, first/alone of the Italians, dared [5] / to unroll all of time in three sheets (*omne aevum tribus explicare cartis*), / learned ones (*doctis*), by Jupiter, and labor-intensive (*laboriosis*). / So have for yourself, this little book-roll (*libelli*), whatever it is and / such as it is; which, o patron virgin, / let it remain for more than one generation (*saeclo*). [10]

Qui dono lepidum novum libellum / arido/a modo pumice expolitum? / Corneli, tibi: namque tu solebas meas esse aliquid putare nugas; / iam tum cum ausus es unus Italorum [5] / omne aevum tribus explicare cartis / doctis, Iuppiter, et laboriosis. / Quare habe tibi quidquid hoc libelli / quaecumque; quod, o patrona virgo, / plus uno maneat perenne saeclo.

Positioned between the *arido/a* and the *pumice* in line 2, the deictic *modo* (“just now”) breaks the connection between the adjective and its rightful noun, seemingly eager to make itself seen. Though the syntactic flexibility of Latin allows for all manner of word orders, it is nonetheless true that, as Richard Weaver appreciates, “the wise user” of any language bends its structures “into the service of his own rhetorical effort.”⁵⁵ Catullus also contends with the recalcitrant demands of meter. In this case, he has chosen hendecasyllabic (that is, eleven syllables per line), and in this line the ‘e’ at the end of *pumice* elides with the ‘e’ at the start of *expolitum*, smoothing them together in imitation of the sensual content. The deictic *modo*

privileges the present moment, the presence of the speaker, the philosophy that locates value in the lived moment, and last but not least, speaking or song over writing” (57-58). Catullus does not shy away from his textuality, nor is he working in an Epicurean modality of presentism, but otherwise he and Horace manage similar feats of rhetorical address.

⁵⁵ Richard Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press, 1985), 117.

modifies the past participle *expolitum*, placing this past textual treatment near the now: “having *just now* been thoroughly polished.” This mix of times accords with the larger play of past, present, and future in this poem.⁵⁶

Catullus and Cornelius Nepos, the specified recipient of the *libellus*, both come from the part of Italy called (from the Roman perspective, of course) Gallia Transpadana, roughly, “that land across the Padus River that used to be Gallic territory”.⁵⁷ The two Transpadanes have a reading history going back—perhaps to that place—to a time when he, Catullus volunteers, squiggled “trifles” and Nepos “had already then dared” to “unroll all of time” in only three book-rolls, producing a “learned” and “labor-intensive” historiographical work, the *Chronica*. It is not the wispieness of poetry when compared to the weightiness of history that accounts for the qualitative differences between Catullus’ and Nepos’ respective writings at that time, but rather the finished state of the *Chronica*: while Catullus writes insubstantial verses, Nepos’ work is already both complete and elegantly compressed. For Nepos to think that Catullus’ scribbles are “something” (*aliquid putare*, 4) is not snobby condescension, but early encouragement: “hey, bud, you’ve really got something there.” But that was then, and this is now.

The *libellus* Catullus presents to Nepos contains something other than that poetry which with Nepos was in that past time “already” (*iam*, 5) familiar, and *modo* emphasizes the time lapse between the old days and the present. *Modo* thus shares an attitude with *novum* (new): whatever it is (“*quidquid...qualecumque*”, 8) that Catullus presents to Nepos, it is so new and

⁵⁶ See John Rauk, “Time and History in Catullus 1,” *The Classical World* 90.5 (May-June 1997): 321.

⁵⁷ See T. P. Wiseman, “The Valerii Catulli of Verona,” in *A Companion to Catullus*, 57-71. It was not until 49 BCE (after Catullus’ death) that its population received full Roman citizenship, which might explain why Catullus calls Nepos “first/alone of the Italians”. Thomas Habinek has argued that this identification might also signify Nepos’ *Chronica* being “Italian, as opposed to exclusively Roman, in outlook” (94, *The Politics of Latin Literature*). Virgil, too, came from this area of Italy.

fresh as to be, as yet, of an undetermined classification. Even though we know from the previously discussed c. 16 that Catullus circulated some poems before assembling this *libellus* and know from this very poem that Nepos too has read earlier poems, Catullus here treats the little book-roll as if it has had no critical reception. He creates a kairotic moment of communicative contact between present(ed) poems and a past reader that extends their relationship into the future.

The *modo* takes on meaning for unnamed readers, too, as the *libellus* indiscriminately announces itself as “just now” pumiced and awaiting sensual and critical response: will readers twitch with pleasure or annoyance? Catullus’ corpus care—the prompt attention to pumice—is not without risks, and all the q’s in lines 8-9 quiver in anticipation of its reception.⁵⁸ It is the indetermination of quality and the concession to and dependence on reader judgment for his *libellus*’ survival that brings out both Catullus’ humility and hubris (they be mock or not). For one, he relies on a patron Muse, not to help produce his poems, but to protect them. He also toys around with the moniker “*pessimi poetae*” (worst/naughtiest of poets), sometimes playfully (or fearfully) marking himself with it (cc. 14, 36, 49). And, as we’ve seen, he expresses pointed aggravation with readers unappreciative of his pumiced pages and disapproving of the pleasure they afford.

Lately, deictic has emerged as a master term for understanding new modes and models of literacy, particularly blogs, and the kinds of interconnected sociality they encourage at great speed and distance.⁵⁹ As Collin Brooke explains, “[t]here is an immediacy to deixis that

⁵⁸ “The series of q’s in *quare-quidquid-qualecumque-quod*—again, whether we treat them as jokey or querulous—display an author seeking acknowledgment from a reader, and manipulating his emotional reaction to achieve it,” as Connolly puts it in *The State of Speech*, 179.

⁵⁹ See, for instance, Kathleen Blake Yancey, “Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key,” *CCC* 56.2 (2004): 297-328.

functions rhetorically as an invitation to shared experience: we are here, in this place, and now, at this time, and we are connected, however briefly, through the shorthand of deixis.”⁶⁰ Though the papyrus book-roll was not a new technology by the time Catullus adopted it as his medium, Roman writers were still experimenting with the social dynamics of distance and absence texts by their nature imply and the kinds of intimacy and presence texts by their nature enable.⁶¹ Though she focuses on only one poem (c. 68), Michèle Lowrie has tagged Catullus’ masterful use of deictic words as a significant aspect of his poetic program, since such words allow him to comment subtly on the communicative implications of textuality.⁶²

One poem in which the social dynamics of the graphic feature prominently is c. 50, addressed to C. Licinus Calvus, an oratorical rival of Cicero’s:

Yesterday (*hesterno*), Licinus, a leisure day, / we played (*lusimus*) a lot on my little tablets (*tabellis*), / since we’d agreed to be playmates (*delicatos*). / Writing little verses (*scribens versiculos*) each of us / were fooling around (*ludebat*), now in this meter, now in that, [5] / swapping back and forth (*reddens mutua*) through joke and wine. / And I went from there, so inflamed (*incensus*) / by your charm (*lepore*), Licinus, and by your wit (*facetiosisque*) / that neither did food satisfy wretched me / nor did sleep cover my eyes with quiet, [10] / but, unconquered, by a fury (*furore*) / I was tossed and turned (*versarer*) upon the whole couch, desiring to see the light, / so that I could speak with you, and also be with you. / But when my limbs (*membra*), worn out by work (*defessa labore*), / were lying half-dead (*semimortua*) on the little couch, [15] / **this poem (*hoc poema*)**, delightful one, I made (*feci*) for you, / through which you can clearly see my pain. / Now, beware of being daring, and I beg, / beware of rejecting my prayers, little gem, / so that Nemesis does not exact punishment from you. [20] / She is a vehement goddess: you beware of harming her.⁶³

⁶⁰ Collin Brooke, “Weblogs as Deictic Systems: Centripetal, Centrifugal, and Small-World Blogging” (“Deixis”): <http://www.bgsu.edu/cconline/brooke/brooke.htm> (.) Accessed May 2010.

⁶¹ See Habinek, *The Politics of Latin Literature*, chapter 5 (“Writing as Social Performance”) for a cultural materialism perspective.

⁶² Michèle Lowrie, “Hic and Absence in Catullus 68,” *Classical Philology* 101 (2006): 115-32. See also chapter 2 (“The Time of Writing and of Song”) of her book *Horace’s Narrative Odes*, where she describes the rhetorical power of lyric’s *hic et nunc*.

⁶³ It behooves me to cite Yeats: “Bald heads forgetful of their sins,/ Old, learned, respectable bald heads/ Edit and annotate the lines / That young men, tossing on their beds, / Rhymed out in love’s despair / To flatter beauty’s ignorant ear. / All shuffle there, all cough in ink; / All wear the carpet with their shoes; / All think what other people think; / All know the man their neighbor knows. / Lord, what would they say / Did their Catullus walk that way?” W. B. Yeats, “The Scholars,” in *W. B. Yeats: Selected Poems*, ed. Timothy Webb, 93-4.

Having agreed to keep things light, Catullus and Calvus fritter the day away in pursuit of mutual pleasure: swapping jokes, sloshing wine, and scribbling verselets in all meters (promiscuous!). When they part ways, Catullus finds himself overcome by Calvus' charm and wit, the very qualities of Catullus' poems that incite sexual itches even in the rhetorically resistant older generation. Food does not settle him, and sleep cruelly evades him as he fidgets the night away on a couch. According to David Wray, Catullus tosses and turns in "the throes of erotic madness".⁶⁴ While the language of this poem writhes with sexual energy and possibly also the jolt of orgasm or the pains of procreation,⁶⁵ the words *versarer* (12), *semimortua membra*, and *defessa labore* (14) suggest an editorial struggle. Catullus describes a rough night of poetic composition that ends in a nocturnal emission in verse.

Of all the verbs pertaining to tormented twisting or cruel agitation, Catullus chooses *verso*, which plainly resembles the noun *versus* (a line of verse). In the previous chapter, I showed that both Aristophanes and Plato describe editing as a "turning" of written words, the former using a word from the workshop, the latter from the stage.⁶⁶ The half-dead limbs are poetic parts—feet here, fingers there—Catullus has rubbed and rearranged in a revisionary fury, "*furor*" being another intriguing word choice. A "*furor poeticus*" is not usually considered editorial in nature. Editing, however, is a necessary step in the transformation of scattered *versiculi* into a solid *poema*. According to c. 50's internal narrative, it, "this poem", is what

⁶⁴ David Wray, *Catullus and the Poetics of Roman Manhood* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 97.

⁶⁵ Skinner, *Catullus* 'Passer', 81; Judith Hallett, "Catullus on Composition: Response," *The Classical World* 81.5 (May-June 1988): 398.

⁶⁶ Aristophanes' *Thesmophorizusae*: Agathon "turns words" (*torneuei...epôn*, 52); Plato's *Phaedrus*: poets, speech-writers, and law-makers join in "turning back and forth at length what they have written, both gluing over and taking away" (*egrapsyen anô katô strephôn en chronôi, pros allêla kollôn te kai aphairôn*, 278e).

Catullus has crafted, grafted together, really, out of exhaustively worked-out limbs at one time spread out and panting on the couch. “This poem” showcases Catullus’ “pain”, both his yearning for Calvus and his strenuous editorial labors, and Catullus prays the latter has produced a poem that will bring Calvus back to him. Or else.

The grammar of presence in this poem emerges from the prominent placement of deictic words “*hesterno*” and “*hoc*” (at the start of lines 1 and 16) and what L. Roman recognizes as “the progression from the imperfect verb and present participles (*scribens...ludebat...reddens*) to the finality of” the perfect tense of *feci*.⁶⁷ Why provide this narrative in lines 1-6? Does Catullus think Calvus will not remember their delightfully imperfect poeticizing? Lines 1-6 are not for jogging Calvus’ memory but for situating other readers of the *libellus* right where Catullus wants them. A day of mutual leisure (*otium*)⁶⁸ has turned into a night of solitary work (*negotium*), meaning the elapsed time from *versiculos* on wax to *poema* on pumiced papyrus is less than a day. Compressed into this small time period, corpus care is something much more active and immediate than the lengthy, finicky grooming of a text.⁶⁹ The deictic words thus operate kairotically, showing Catullus’ poem to be a quick response to that undeniable rhetorical invitation that is “an imperfection marked by urgency”.⁷⁰ He pines for Calvus’ company. The kairotic deictics also purport to demonstrate Catullus’ astounding speed at crafting a polished poem: a sure sign of his ability. That Catullus should want readers to think he composes

⁶⁷ L. Roman, “A History of Lost Tablets,” 358.

⁶⁸ Extrapolating from what Catullus and Cicero write about their writing, Stroup calls *otium* “time to write” or “textual time” (34-5, 38).

⁶⁹ “His bits of ‘fooling around’ are a polished translation, which has been altered to cast the spotlight ever more on the poet himself and his talents”, as Elizabeth Manwell puts it in her contribution to *A Companion to Catullus*, 125.

⁷⁰ This is, of course, Lloyd Bitzer’s definition of exigency in his famous construction of “The Rhetorical Situation,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1.1 (1968): 1-14.

intensively over a short time rather than idly over a long time suggests his awareness of hostile attitudes toward overly fussy word-workers.

Readers of the *libellus* will recall that Calvus and Catullus have playfully exchanged verses before.

If I didn't love you more than my very eyes, / most delightful Calvus, I would hate you/ with the hatred of Vatinius on account of this gift: / really, what have I done or what have I said, / that you should cruelly destroy me with so many poets? [5] / May the gods send down all their plagues upon that client of yours / who sent you such impiety. / But if, as I suspect, this new and rediscovered / gift was given to you by Sulla the schoolmaster (*litterator*), / then I am not bad off, but well and happy, [10] / because your labors did not go to waste. / Great gods, what a rough and unholy little book (*horribilem et sacrum libellum*), / which you, of course, gave to your Catullus, / to kill him on the very day of the Saturnalia, best of days. [15] / No, no, faulty one, you will not get away with this: / for, once it's light, I am running to the book-roll cases (*scrinia*) of the booksellers (*ad librariorum*), / for the Caesii, Aquini, / Suffensus, all such poisons all collected together, / and I will return the favor of these offerings. [20] / You here (*vos hinc*), meanwhile, farewell, be gone / to that place where you offered up your bad feet (*malum pedem*) for sale, / you annoyances of our age, very worst of poets (*saecli incommada, pessimi poetae*). (c. 14)

When traditional Saturnalian gift-giving cruelly deviates, Catullus swears that he would hate Calvus as much as Vatinius, whom Calvus effectively and eloquently prosecuted in court (c. 53), if he were not so attached to him, or, presumably if Calvus had passed on the bad poetry as a serious gift rather than a gag. Catullus protests that Calvus has “kill[ed]” him by presenting him with a “rough and unholy little book” (*horribilem et sacrum libellum*, 12). This “gift” is actually a re-gift, and Catullus tries to riddle out which legal client of Calvus could have given it to him. At first, he casts aspersions on this tasteless person, but then it occurs to him that a schoolmaster, who for one reason or another, it seems, had not yet compensated Calvus for his legal services, has finally done so: no good deed goes unpunished. One would hope that a man of letters, which is literally Sulla's job description, would be more discriminating in his literary tastes. In return for Calvus' passing on Sulla's present, Catullus pledges to rush out at first light “to the book-roll cases (*scrinia*) of the book-sellers (*librariorum*), for the Caesii, Aquini, Suffenus,” referring to the book-rolls by the names of their authors, as we still do today with books. On this topsy-turvy

day of status reversals, lowly poets get no temporary boost of critical classification, though they do get a sale.

Notice that, as in c. 50, Calvus' poem-related teasing has made Catullus desperate for dawn and to see Calvus again. But in playful perversion of the polished poem Catullus assembles out of exerted poetic parts and presents to Calvus in/as c. 50 as a means of getting him back, Catullus here means to get him back by slipping him "all such poisons all collected together" (19). Nemesis looms over both poems. Yet, poem c. 14 itself does this revenge work in high style; Catullus cannot bear to see his friend writhe in pain only. Meanwhile, Catullus banishes Calvus' "gift" back to that place where "you offered up your bad feet (*malum pedem*) for sale" (22), in effect allowing for its continued circulation, if indeed anyone should want lame verses (they do have their uses).

Fixed in a "just now" that recurs with each reading (*modo*, c. 1.2) or a "this" near a "yesterday" through which exhaustively worked-out poetic parts and its finished form merge into one (*hoc* and *hesterno*, c. 50.16 and 1), corpus care gains recency, relevancy, and reader-directedness; in short, rhetorical energy. Constant pumicing throughout a lengthy composition might suggest the vigorous elimination of fluff, but excessive care with regard to any corpus risks facing rhetorical irrelevance and accusations of gender-troubling fastidiousness. Marking his corpus care with a "sensitivity to timeliness",⁷¹ Catullus plays at the limits of appropriate *cultus*. Editing-related kairotic deictics foreshorten the time the reader perceives to have elapsed between the care of a corpus and its emergence in finished form, allowing Catullus to "show off" the preparations that distinguish his verses from others' without drawing attention to all the time

⁷¹ "Sensitivity to timeliness" is John Poulakos' phrase. See his "*Kairos* in Gorgias' Rhetorical Compositions," in *Rhetoric and Kairos*, ed. Phillip Sipiora and James S. Baumlin (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002), 89-96, for a brief study of how Gorgias infuses his rhetorical set-pieces with a sense of kairotic response.

he may have spent tearing at and tarrying with his rough drafts. There is no unmanly indecision lurking behind Catullan corpus care; we never see anything like Isocratean iterations of edit after edit.⁷² By pairing the purposeful exposure of his editing with kairotic deictics, Catullus tilts emphasis away from the private care of his corpus and toward the moment of its public contact with others. In both c. 1 and c. 50, the representation of hard work has persuasive purpose: the perpetuation of its product. His little book is smooth, ready, at hand. His limbs recover quickly and beautifully from their exhaustion. Take up and read. Moreover, Catullus' corpus care results in poems well worth taking up and reading even after the events occasioning their composition have long past.

Another function of the abundant poetic materiality represented in the *libellus* is its critical engagement with inferior if not insufferable poets of Catullus' generation. By parading the poetic negligence of such poets throughout his *libellus*, Catullus dramatizes the risks lurking for uncared-for written words. Confining his own editing to the kairotic deictic mode and teasing poets who do not edit, Catullus recalls the care his corpus has received without repeatedly representing it within every poem (though each poem is, in a real way, representative of corpus care). The variety of dangers bad verses face—often at his very (writing) hand—affirms his choice not to prematurely push every verse out into public places. Foremost among Catullus' list of irksome poetic practices ranks the unchecked production of verses and the related curtailment of erasure and polish.

2.4 HASTE AND WASTE (c. 22, c. 36, c. 95)

That Suffenus of yours, Varus, whom you know well, / is a lovely and witty-talking and urbane man, / and that same man makes too many verses by far. / I reckon either ten thousand or more / to have been written by that one, and not, as it's usually done, [5] / recorded on palimpsest: but on royal sheets, new

⁷² For instance, this little number from Oscar Wilde: "I was working on the proof of one of my poems all the morning, and took out a comma. In the afternoon I put it back again."

book-rolls, / new umbilici, with red leather straps, with covers (*membrana*) / ruled with lead, and everything evened out with pumice. / When you read those, the dashing and urbane / Suffenus seems, on the contrary, a goat-milker or ditch-digger: [10] / so much does he differ and change. / How do we account for this? He who just now seemed a man about town / or somebody at least more refined (*tersius*) in this matter, / the same man is now duller than the dull countryside, / as soon as he touches poems, and the same man is never [15] / equally as happy as when he's writing a poem: / he rejoices in himself and admires himself so much. / Clearly we're all similarly duped, nor is there anyone / whom you are not able to see as a Suffenus in some way. / A flaw is assigned to each: [20] / but we don't see the pack that's in back.

Suffenus iste, Vare, quem probe nosti, / homo est venustus et dicax et urbanus, / idemque longe plurimos facit versus. / Puto esse ego illi milia aut decem aut plura / perscripta, nec sic ut fit in palimpsesto [5] / *relata: cartae reginae, novi libri, / novi umbilici, lora rubra, membrana / directa plumbo, et pumice omnia aequata.* / *Haec cum legas tu, bellus ille et urbanus / Suffenus unus caprimulgus aut fossor* [10] / *rursus videtur: tantum abhorret ac mutat. / Hoc quid putemus esse? Qui modo scurra / Aut siquid hac re tersius videbatur, / idem infaceto est infacetior rure, / simul poemata attigit, neque idem umquam* [15] / *Aequae est beatus ac poema cum scribit: / tam gaudet in se tamque se ipse miratur. / Nimirum idem omnes fallimur, neque est quisquam / quem non in aliqua re videre Suffenum / possis. Suus cuique attributus est error:* [20] / *sed non videmus manticae quod in tergo est.*

Readers of the *libellus* (and this chapter) have seen Suffenus identified as a literary toxin in c. 14, and here Catullus provides substantiation for that assessment. Perhaps through their mutual friend Varus, Catullus has talked with or in the very least heard Suffenus, who “is” (*est*) the type of man esteemed by Catullus and company: “*venustus et dicax et urbanus*”. Catullus’ deployment of polysyndeton (*et...et*) causes readers to pause and consider each adjective as part of an inventory of Suffenus’ sophisticated traits, and it seems at first that Catullus has promoted Suffenus’ words from *venena* (poison[ous]) to *venustus* (lovely). *Dicax* speaks to the oral nature of Suffenus’ urbanity (*dico*, I say), and as we read, we begin to understand why Catullus makes the distinction.

Suffenus gets great joy from writing poetry. Catullus quantifies his estimation of Suffenus’ rampant versifying—10,000 lines or more; for comparison’s sake, Homer’s *Iliad* has nearly 16,000 and Catullus’ *libellus* as we know it fewer than 2,300—and then turns to Suffenus’ writing method, which is completely devoid of drafting or editing of any kind. Instead of first writing little verses on wax tablets like Catullus does, or writing longer poems on palimpsests

(which themselves have been written on before and scrapped serviceably clean by pumice), he writes directly onto the finest textual materials available. Maybe he's just that good? No. When "you read" his "poems", you see the Suffenus—who in speech "is" city-slick—morph before your eyes into a goat-teat-squeezing, dirt-shoveling⁷³ country bumpkin. What effects this vulgar transformation? Suffenus' uncritical overvaluation of his love object: his poems. He has only to touch (*attigit*) them and the sharpness that makes talking to him (or hearing him talk) so delightful retracts into dullness (*infaceto, infacitior*). In love with his first efforts—an elementary error—he presents them to full physical advantage: externally, his corpus resembles another literary object with which we are familiar: Catullus' own *libellus*.

The verse-giddy Suffenus commits his first and only poetic forms to the highest available grade of papyrus, "evened out by pumice"⁷⁴ and fitted with new parts, which, as I explained in the introduction, are bodily in nomenclature (e.g., bellybuttons, skin). But a poet needs *pumex* throughout the composition process, to wear down the uneven surfaces of a fibrous book-roll before presenting it to others, certainly, but also to rub out errors and inelegancies before a poet even contemplates the papyrus stage. Suffenus cannot be bothered. For Catullus, Suffenus is proof that one cannot judge a book-roll by its cover solely or a man's refinement by his speech only. As Marilyn Skinner puts it, "Suffenus has carefully burnished his image, and it suffices for all normal social intercourse. But in a self-revealing activity like poetry the mask will always slip."⁷⁵ Speech, though, is also a self-revealing activity, and one in which Suffenus excels. He is not, therefore, so much an imposter to *urbanitas*, as incomplete in achieving it fully, contrary to appearance and expectation.

⁷³ A furrow is, of course, one definition of *versus*.

⁷⁴ Its dryness is not mentioned in c. 22, evidence by omission that "*arido*" is an important element of Catullan aesthetics)

⁷⁵ Skinner, *Catullus*' Passer, 56

The comparative adjective *tersius* (more refined, line 13; from *tero*, *trivi*, *tritum*: rub, smooth, polish)⁷⁶ might have motivated Skinner to call Suffenus' image "burnished", an aesthetic quality and attitude central to Catullus' abrasive poetics. The similar adjective "*tersus*" (clean, neat, polished; from *tergeo*, *tergere*, *tersi*, *tersus*: wipe, scour, clean)⁷⁷ is the tidy cognate of our English word "terse", which even through the 17th century meant "wiped, brushed; smooth; clean-cut, sharp-cut; polished, burnished; neat, trim, spruce" or, figuratively, "polite, polished, refined, cultured; esp. in reference to language" (OED s.v. *terse*). Nowadays, "terse" means something more like "moodily abrupt", almost as if brushing someone off; the abrasive aspect of the word, therefore, has withstood time, but the polished dimension has not.⁷⁸

Suffenus may well attract others with his smooth conversation, but one wonders if that will change once Catullus' discovery becomes common knowledge. Suffenus' lively orality redeems him to an extent, but it also heightens Catullus' surprise at the incongruity between this person's spoken words and written ones. This poem, having 21 elisions in its 21 lines, clips and

⁷⁶ *Tero* relates etymologically and attitudinally to the Isocratean philoponic rhetorical term, *diatribô* (dia + teirô).

⁷⁷ Martial uses this verb to signify emendation of his *liber* in *Epigram* 6.1.3.

⁷⁸ According to Michael Putnam, "22, 13," *Hermes* 96.4 (1968): 554-5, no Roman writers use *tero*-words to describe textual treatments, so he argues that Catullus here refers to Suffenus' body. Suffenus looks to be an urban smoothie who is "'polished', rubbed down like a good-looking manuscript and handsome man-about-town." Putnam is mistaken, however. I have found *tero*-words used to describe oratorical style resultant from skill with the *stilus* (Cicero's *De Oratore* 3) and editing of a text (Tacitus' *Dialogus* 3.2). Putnam also refers to another one of *tero*'s Greek cognates—*toros*—and notes its presence in an extant fragment of Callimachus, wherein the poet of the slender taunts Antimachus for constructing a poem with words chubby and "*ou toron*", not sharp, distinct, polished down into well-articulated parts. Putnam does not point out, however, that Aristophanes' uses this word (without the "*ou*") in *Frogs* to describe Euripides' style (1102), also characterizing/caricaturing it as slim, sophisticated, and citified. Also, *toros* attitudinally (and perhaps too etymologically) resembles the word "*torneuô*", which Aristophanes uses in *Thesmophorizusae* to explain one of the editorial activities practiced by the razored Agathon (54), and whose Latin equivalent (*tornus*) Horace uses in the *Ars Poetica* in a section on editing (438-441). In short, *toros* had enjoyed a long rhetoricopoetic lineage even by the time Callimachus adopted it, and its physiological feel is apparent, linking a poem's limbs with its poet's.

zips when read metrically. Through those elisions, Catullus' readers sound out the affective sense that animates this poem: bemusement. Having the rhetorical dynamism of both an incredulous response to a shocking revelation and an embellished snatch of gossip, c. 22 potentially jeopardizes Varus' relationship with Suffenus and potentially reinforces Varus' relationship with Catullus, who is able to make a scandal of Suffenus' bad poetry and a display of his own good poetry at the same time. If Varus truly values (a)rousing wittiness, then he will cherish Catullus. If not, Catullus gives himself (as well as Suffenus) an out by borrowing a page from Aesop's book: forgive us our faults. Bad poetry—poorly crafted or wickedly witty—can damage one's social standing.

The poet Volusius' lack of editorial control gives Catullus further cause to demonstrate his comparative mastery. C. 95, one of two poems in which Volusius features, positions Volusius as the Roman analogue to "swollen Antimachus" (*tumido Antimacho*), whose words Callimachus judged chubby and unrubbed, as I just showed.

The *Smyrna*⁷⁹ of my Cinna, at last published (*edita*) nine harvest tides and nine /winters after it was begun, / while that Hatrian published five hundred thousand [verses] in one. / The *Smyrna* will be sent all the way to the deep-channeled waters of Satrachus, / the ages go grey as they continually roll out (*pervoluent*) the *Smyrna*. / But the annals of Volusius will die by their very own Padua, / and often present themselves as loose tunics for mackerels. / The small monuments (*parva ... monumenta*) of my [Cinna] touch my heart (*cordi*), / so let the general public (*populus*) rejoice in swollen (*tumido*) Antimachus.

Just as Catullus credits Cinna with laboring over his poem-made-*parva monumenta* for nine season cycles, he criticizes Volusius for issuing great gobs of undistinguished verses—even more than Suffenus—in only one. Less is more in verses, but not in time; Volusius needs to

⁷⁹ Though this item may have weathered many ages, it ultimately has survived only in reference. By all accounts, it was a very carefully wrought treatment of Smyrna's forbidden infatuation with her father Cinyras, and its consummation, which resulted in the ill-fated golden boy Adonis. Also known as Myrrha, her disturbing tale is recounted by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* X.300ff. Cinna appears at c. 10.30, too. He also features in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, where he suffers from a case of mistaken identity and is torn limb from limb by an angry mob.

invert his ratio. While the *Smyrna* will travel far from its place of origin, Volusius' volumes will be bound in and bound to their native city, destined not to hook readers again and again with their come hither verses but rather to wrap fish after fish sold in the marketplace. Using an adjective prominent in the stylistic debates at the time (*tumidus*) to link Volusius with an ancient Alexandrian poet who did not know when enough was enough, Catullus tells us his own heart belongs to the small and not the swollen. That he views his affection for compact masterpieces as other than the general feeling (*populus ... gaudeat*) suggests prevailing low standards of poetic workmanship, but of course it is in Catullus' interests to mark his tastes, his poems, and his readers as aristocratic.

At least one copy of Volusius seems to have escaped being a fish toga in his native city, but it is still in danger of never being read again.

Annals of Volusius, shitty sheets (cacata carta), / fulfill the vow of my gal. / For to the sacred Venuses and Cupids / she pledged that, if I were to be reconciled to her / and stop hurling forth savage iambs, [5] / she would give the worst poet's (pessimi poetae) / choicest writings (electissima scripta) to the slow-footed god / to be burned as unlucky firewood. / And thus she saw the worst gal (pessima puella) herself / pledge jokingly (iocose) and brightly (lepide) to the gods: [10] / "Now o creature emergent from the cerulean sea, / who dwells in the sacred Idalium and open Urium, / and who dwells in Ancona and reedy Cnidus / and in Amathus and in Golgi / and in Dyrrhachium the tavern of all Hadria, [15] / record the vow as received and paid back, / if it is neither dull nor unlovely (non illepidum neque invenustum est)." / But you, meanwhile, come into the flame, / full of the rural and the unwitty (pleni ruris et infacetiarum), / Annals of Volusius, shitty sheets (cacata carta). [20] (c. 36)

That "fecopoetics" looks to be an explosive sub-field in medieval literary studies, the novelist Anne Lamott encourages writers to boldly expel "shitty first drafts", and Joshua Gunn squeezes "ShitText" together demonstrates the enduring impulse to explore literary production excrementitiously.⁸⁰ Lamott avows that "all good writers" write "shitty first drafts": "[t]his is

⁸⁰ For "fecopoetics" see Susan Signe Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages: Sacred Filth and Chaucer's Fecopoetics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and the Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1995); Joshua Gunn,

how they end up with good second drafts and terrific third drafts.”⁸¹ Volusius’ problem is not that he writes shitty first drafts, but that he publishes them. The work here mentioned, *Annales*, is a year-by-year account of some topic or another, and no traces of it but this one remain.⁸² *Annales* is also the name of a poem authored by the early Roman republic poet Ennius, whose rhythms, Cicero reports, the “new poets” find uncouth (*Orator* §160-161); Volusius’ poetry, lacking the quality of *novus*, is the same old shit. Sonically, its English translation, *Annals*, resembles “anal”, a resemblance Will Ferrell exploited to comic effect in his George W. Bush mock tribute show of 2009, when Dubya contemplated his legacy in the “anals of history.”⁸³ *Annales* comes from the Latin *annus* (year), but(t) one letter off from *anus*; one has to strain for cohesion in the Latin. Happily, English gives us yet two more scatological sayings. Volusius suffers from “verbal diarrhea”,⁸⁴ and Catullus’ expert recommendation would likely be that Volusius apply pumice to the affected areas, though one cannot polish a turd.

That technicality does not matter so much, though, because Catullus demands Volusius offer himself as a sacrifice to the Venuses and Cupids who expect the best of the worst verses that have been promised to them. Perturbed by Catullus’ petulant poems—*vibrare*, “to hurl, brandish” seems to indicate Catullus is venting his frustrations with Lesbia in public (cc. 8 and 60, maybe; c. 37 is a good contender)—Catullus’ *puella* (Lesbia) has pledged to burn “the most choice writings” of “the *pessimi* poet” in homage to Venus’ hobbling husband Vulcan in return

“ShitText: Toward a New Coprophilic Style,” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 26.1 (January 2006): 79-97.

⁸¹ Lamott, *Bird by Bird*, 21.

⁸² It’s one of antiquity’s delicious ironies that Catullus’ poems are the only surviving proof of bad poets like Sufferus and Volusius, just as our knowledge of the sophists would be even more minimal if not for Plato, for better or worse.

⁸³ Will Ferrell, “You’re Welcome America: A Final Night with George W. Bush,” HBO, 2009.

⁸⁴ See Lindsay C. Watson, “Catullan Recycling: *Cacata Carta*,” *Mnemosyne* 58.2 (2005): 272. She interprets “*cacata carta*” as “a wickedly scatological recasting” (270) of Callimachus *Hymn* 2.

for the cessation of hostilities, which this poem itself evidences to have taken place. *Pessimi* (the superlative of *malus*, bad, wicked, or even naughty) joins the assortment of evaluative words—such as *castum* (lacking blemish, c. 16) and *agathon* (good)—that have both an ethical and an aesthetic valence. As others have noted, Catullus takes advantage of the play in *pessimi*'s meaning: “you want to burn bad poetry? I know just the stuff!” It is Catullus who imports voluminous Volusius into the lover's tiff. Catullus needs to find a stand-in; that he bounces the superlative adjective *pessim-* back at his *puella* shows he knows full well it is *his* writings she intends to consign to the *tardipedi* god. Vulcan is an apt choice of dedicatee, given his fire's central civilizing role in ancient anthropological myths, his role as the craftsman god (*ergon Hêphaistoio* is idiomatic for a finely wrought metal object), and his mangled foot, which he has in common with the ungraceful feet of bad verses or the uneven feet of iambic verse.⁸⁵ Some poems can be redeemed by *pumex*—which is, of course, a Vulcanic product—while others just deserve the fire.

Catullus spins his girl's votive promises as jocose and bright (yet another appearance of *lepid(us)*), and it could very well be that she lured Catullus with great rhetorical craftiness, for what could bring him back faster than promising to roast his writings? But if she is in earnest, Catullus needs a sacrificial substitute. He crafts, in the *puella*'s voice, an over the top follow-up prayer to sea-foam-cradled Venus, mentioning the locations of her most famous shrines, and asking that the vow be considered fulfilled, since it has been offered in such bright and Venus-

⁸⁵ In his article “Sacrifice and Bookburning in Catullus' Poem 36,” *Hermes* 106.1 (1978): 138-155, Svein Østerud refers to Diogenes Laertius' anecdote that Plato called upon Hephaestus (by means of a line from Homer's *Iliad*) when he threw his poetry in the fire and decided to follow Socrates (155).

pleasing language (*non illepidum neque invenustum*, a rhetorical understatement called litotes),⁸⁶ and since the sacrificial papyrus, “meanwhile” (*interrea*), has been charring. Catullus knocks out two more insults against Volusius, describing the latter’s poems as running over with the rustic and unwitty—the very same problems with Suffenus’ piffle (c. 22.14)—and repeating the scatological alliteration from line 1 that skids in Latin (*ca-ca-ta car-ta*), tongue-twists in English (shitty sheets), and runs afoul of decency in both.

2.5 CONCLUSION

“Poetry is nobody's business except the poet's, and everybody else can fuck off.” Philip Larkin⁸⁷

Catullus matches Larkin in both emphatic vulgarity and its application to poetics; the ancient poet seems, however, more concerned with a gate-keeping issue preliminary to the modern poet’s: who has business being a poet and who, I demur, does not? Onto a city where bad poets are running loose, Catullus unleashes his abrasive poetics, an edgy exemplum of craftsmanship that combines beauty and cruelty. Underlying his aesthetic standards is an ethics of labor and care that exposes him to potential ridicule, and he anticipates criticism of his excessive cultivation in several ways. For example, in c. 1, he acknowledges through the open-ended word in lines 8-9 that readers can and will take the *libellus* for what they will, whereas in c. 16, he complicates the simple equation of the poet with the *ego* in his poems and embraces those qualities of his poems that titillate even those thought long beyond titillation. Catullus also deploys the kairotic deictic, situating his corpus care in a time near that of reading, which endows his poems with rhetorical freshness and his composition method with something other

⁸⁶ Same adjectives applied to Varus’ “professional” love at c. 10.4, further evidence that these words apply to a style of living and not just speaking or writing.

⁸⁷ Quoted in Janice Rossen, *Philip Larkin: His Life's Work* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), 102, though I have admittedly used only one line of a paragraph-length quotation, and, as Rossen traces, Larkin holds the pleasure of his readers as the paragon of poetic concerns.

than dainty indecisiveness. Lastly, he belittles poets who do not slow down and edit and who shamelessly sling their slop all over Rome.

In the next chapter, I turn to Horace, who, like Catullus, pitches himself as quality control for Roman poetics, and leads the way with a tool of corpus care. Unlike Catullus, however, Horace does not—perhaps *cannot*, given the changed political conditions—presume that poetry is only the business of poets; it is a civic matter that falls under the jurisdiction of Augustus. By entangling poetics and politics, Horace does not simply acquiesce to necessity, rather, he plays on Augustus’ agenda of dominance at home and abroad to secure a lofty place for polished poems of all genres, even ones less imposing and triumphal than epic.

CHAPTER 3 – THE HORACE FILE

“*me...corporis exigui...*” (“My body is slight...”) Horace, *Epistulae* 1.20.23-4

“...all writers, no matter how fat, thin, or flabby, have good figures. They are always working out.” Natalie Goldberg, *Writing Down the Bones* (50)

The composition of words worth reading takes effort, exertion, exhaustion. The body of the composer and that of the composition are bound in an inverse relationship: the pains of the former bring about more that pleases in the latter. And it does not—*should* not—end there. On the rough heels of put-together¹ words comes the sloughing off of any number of them. In the previous chapter, I argued that Catullus issues a lively corrective to bad aesthetic choices he observes being made by Roman writers and readers by letting loose his abrasive poetics in a book-roll scrubbed thoroughly inside and out, its wounding valuations liberally salted with wit. For Horace, too, “good poetry is the product not just of writing but also of reconsiderations, constant erasures, and rewritings”, as Yun Lee Too asserts in *The Idea of Ancient Literary Criticism*.² Like Catullus, Horace plies the *pumex*,³ but it is his love of the *lima* (file) that most defines him. Indeed, I claim later in this chapter that Horace’s sole roll-out of a pumiced *liber* acts as a sour commentary on the crassness of mass appeal, the *pumex* signifying a kind of warm, wanton textuality that first stirs up desire and makes people grabby, but ends in one humiliating

¹ The literal translation of the Latin verb *compono*, *componere*, *composui*, *compositus*, whence, after a long journey, our “composition”.

² Yun Lee Too, *The Idea of Ancient Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 164.

³ More precisely, it is his literary agents who do; see *Epistulae* 1.20.

way or another for its author. The pumice's double association with the look of a book-roll and the morally dubious allure of its contents does not need much of a push from Horace to slide into disrespectability. The filed text, on the other hand, coolly courts the esteem and appreciation of those precious "*paucis lectoribus*"⁴ with discernment. Though Horace does not use this *lima*-variant, the adjective *limatulus* (somewhat filed) describes a person with refined and sensitive judgment; in other words, his ideal reader.

Whereas Catullus names the bad poet-writers of his age (all those Caesii and Aquini (c. 14.18), Suffenus (cc. 14.19, 22), and Volusius (cc. 36, 95)), Horace characterizes bad poetry writing as the mark of his age.⁵ The poetic excesses and deficiencies he observes are something other, bigger than the faults of a few individuals blissfully ignorant of the demands of writing "*recte*", a lovely Latin adverb meaning both "correctly" (a technical consideration) and "suitably" (a rhetorical consideration).⁶ These days, innumerable elite Romans, no matter their fitness,⁷ scribble verse, and Horace lodges this complaint from his first work (*Sermones*) to his last (*Ars Poetica*). Some even challenge him to poem-offs or brag on the stamina of their pens as he walks down the street.⁸

Additionally, as they did for Catullus, poetic precedents impinge on Horace's literary efforts. In c. 95, Catullus derides the public's affection for "swollen"⁹ Antimachus", a 3rd century BCE Alexandrian poet, and in his first work (*Sermones*), Horace contends with Gaius Lucilius, a

⁴ "Few readers/choosers," *Sermones* 1.10.74. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

⁵ Horace does, though, name names from time to time.

⁶ For one instance of *scribendi recte*, see *Sermones* 1.4.13, for another, see *Ars Poetica* 309.

⁷ He uses an athletic analogy at *Ars Poetica* 379-82, linking athletic sweat and aesthetic sweat. I treat *Ars* in the final content segment of this chapter.

⁸ *Sermones* 1.4.13-21, 1.9.23-4.

⁹ Horace uses a similar adjective (*turgidus*) to describe a contemporary epic poet, M. Furius Bibaculus (*Sermones* 1.10.36).

2nd century BCE Roman satirist to whom readers seem to deem him inferior.¹⁰ Horace expresses his aversion to the trends and preferences of his time and holds himself aloft from them in several ways. First, neither Lucilius nor the swarms of poetasters edit, happy to produce hundreds of lines as if nothing were easier. One of Horace's most distinctive counter-traits is his fondness for the file. Second, tied to the poeticizing craze is a dynamic pulsing in Catullus but very much present in Horace: the increasing rage for poets to make their work widely available, that is, to recite their work in public venues or submit it to the stalls of booksellers. Entertaining a crowd, especially *viva voce*, does not interest Horace in the least and, more than that, he claims to feel de(-)filed—his hard work effaced, his person tainted—by mere contact with the masses.¹¹ Any work containing such lofty authorial rejections of the popular avoids being torn to shreds only by the grace of some serious protection, and Horace had precisely that.¹²

Not long after meeting Maecenas¹³ through his poet-friends Virgil and Varius (*Sermones* 1.6.52-64), Horace was welcomed into his generous patronage and by extension but not by default received the official nod of Octavian.¹⁴ Without dwelling on the intractably difficult matter of Horace's "true" feelings towards Augustus,¹⁵ one can marvel at the turn of events through which an officer in Brutus and Cassius' fighting force—defeated by Octavian and

¹⁰ He also measures himself against Greece's great lyric poets, especially Sappho and Alcaeus. For reasons I later make clear, I treat the *Odes* only cursorily.

¹¹ *Sermones* 1.6.18, *Odes* 1.1.32, 2.16.41, and 3.1.1, *Epistulae* 1.1.70-80 and 1.19.35-49.

¹² That does not stop Horace, however, from fighting his own battles. He writes of the prospect of being shredded by the sharp nails of a critic who deems him a snob at *Epistulae* 1.19.46.

¹³ Maecenas was the closest thing the ancient world had to a minister of culture, and still today a patron of the arts or of an artist is called "a Maecenas."

¹⁴ Horace meets Maecenas in 38 BCE, and Octavian does not adopt the title of Augustus until 27, by which time Horace had already written and circulated the *Sermones* and *Epodes*.

¹⁵ See Duncan Kennedy, "'Augustan' and 'Anti-Augustan': Reflection on Terms of Reference," in *Roman Poetry and Propaganda in the Age of Augustus*, ed. Anton Powell, 26-58 (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1992), where he shows such qualifiers to be unhelpful and simplistic heuristics.

Antoni¹⁶ at Philippi in 42 BCE—came to take up this plush and powerful position mere years later.¹⁶ Horace divulges that after Philippi he found himself “earth-bound (*humilem*),¹⁷ with wings clipped, and without the resources of my father’s / home and farm”—which was most likely confiscated—and thus “compelled” by “bold poverty to write verses” (*Epistulae* 2.2.49-52).

The change in Horace’s fortunes (if not his allegiances) has typically been attributed to his inestimable entertainment value for Maecenas and inestimable propaganda value for Octavian/Augustus, and one can view Horace’s situation from at least five perspectives. One, he’s a sell-out, a traitor to his republican principles. Two, a more cynical version of the first position, he’s a free-rider, a barnacle attached to Augustus’ ship of state, riding it solely to get ahead and spread his own reputation. Three, he’s a genuine convert to the order arising out of the chaos. Four, he’s a double agent, for, if one reads suspiciously enough, one can find a sneer underlying all of Horace’s flattering gestures to Augustus and his so-called *pax*. Five, which is my position, Horace’s writings show such complexity and sensitivity—they were, after all, written over a thirty-year span—that no one-faceted appraisal of his motives or moods suffices. Rather than being simply adopted (Horace as war orphan) or co-opted (Horace as swallowed by “the system”) during a low period in his life, Horace actively and continually adapts to personal

¹⁶ Horace had attained the position of *tribunus militum*, as he himself recounts in the autobiographical poem, *Sermones* 1.6. 1.7 recounts a tale involving Brutus. He also writes about his military service in *Odes* (see especially 2.7) and in *Epistulae* 2.2. See Mario Citroni, “The Memory of Philippi in Horace and the Interpretation of *Epistles* 1.20,” *The Classical Journal* 96.1 (Oct. – Nov. 2000): 27-56, for a sensitive treatment of Horace’s careful deployment of war stories. Gordon Williams points out that Cicero’s son and Horace, who were the same age, were both capping off their studies in philosophy and rhetoric in Athens when Brutus recruited them, in “*Libertino patre natus*,” in *Oxford Readings in Horace’s Satires and Epistles*, ed. Kirk Freudenburg (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 149.

¹⁷ From whence our “humiliated.” Horace describes his sermonic Muse as “*pedestri*” at *Sermones* 2.6.17, his chats as “*repentis per humum*” at *Epistulae* 2.1.250-1, and how fear of a storm can make poets “creep along the ground” at *Ars Poetica* 28.

and political circumstances that are “changed, changed utterly”¹⁸ by a grisly civil war and that continue to flux thereafter.

In this chapter, I contend that Horace’s endorsement of the file constitutes a civic act as well as a statement of authorial principle, since he places himself at the vanguard of contemporary Roman literary dominance—as compared to the productions of both ancient Greeks, ancient Romans, and modern poetasters—and ultimately pitches this dominance as a necessary complement to Rome’s military might: the Latin tongue is still tripping in its efforts to catch up to its arms, as he puts it in *Ars Poetica* (289-290). Cicero, in his *Pro Archia* of 62 BCE,¹⁹ had pitied the “slight” (*exiguus*) influence of Latin literature and exhorted his audience that Roman “fame and glory” should “penetrate” the same places as its spears (§23), in essence, issuing a call for cultural conquest. Surely Horace appeals to Augustus when he emphasizes the irony that “captive Greece” captured feral Rome and brought Greek *ars* into what had been an uncultivated land (*Epistulae* 2.1.156-7); it is high time Roman literature did the dominating. Though Horace occasional peers beyond the horizon of Rome to scope it out for his own work,²⁰ he seems more interested in the city, and though he declares disinterest in and disgust at the book culture of the streets, that is not to say he abjures being publically available. Augustus’ famous building projects included several libraries, the most glamorous one nestled next to his palace on the Palatine Hill, and Horace appeals to its shelves and the importance of filling them with

¹⁸ To quote Yeats’ opinion of the result of “Easter 1916”, which occurred five years before the Irish civil war.

¹⁹ A passionate defense of poetry, undertaken as Cicero defended a Greek-born poet called Archias, whose citizenship status was under scrutiny.

²⁰ *Epistulae* 1.20 and *Ars Poetica* 345-6, for instance. It’s noteworthy that his literary agents, the Sosii brothers, also feature nearby. See also *Odes* 2.20.

worthy materials (*Epistulae* 2.1).²¹ Augustus is uniquely suited and situated to give poets the impetus they need—promised patronage, wide distribution of their work—to create book-rolls worthy of his assorted emendations to Rome.

Though it is fruitless to deny that fear (*metus*) dwells in meticulousness, it is less unrewarding to argue about what kind of fear drives Horace to value trim poetry so highly. Does he cleave to his editing tools with the stereotypical nervousness of a writer nursing reception worries or with the expected timorousness (to use a Latinate word that shivers with s's) of a writer in censorious times? Is the file his only protection against the exposure of his uncensored thoughts and the resultant counterblow of powerful men (Octavian/Augustus above all)? By tracing the trail of Horace's meticulous file across his *Sermones* (two book-rolls), *Epistulae* (two book-rolls), and *Ars Poetica* (one book-roll),²² I mean to push against the prevailing view on Horace's strictures on the *stilus*: that he "made a literary virtue out of a political necessity," as Emily Gowers puts it,²³ the "necessity" being having to watch one's words in a time of declining *libertas* for speech. As Cicero and Catullus' republican-era insistence on editing demonstrates,

²¹ For a fuller treatment of how Roman poets relied on libraries to make poetic points, see Anthony J. Marshall, "Library Resources and Creative Writing at Rome," *Phoenix* 30.3 (Autumn 1976): 252-264, and see Nicholas Horsfall, "Empty Shelves on the Palatine," *Greece & Rome* 40.1 (April 1993): 62-65, for attention to potential display within the library as a goad for Roman writers.

²² I will handle the book-rolls by order of their presumed issuance. The estimated dates of release for all of his writings are: *Sermones* I in 35 BCE, II in 30; *Epodes* in 30; *Odes* 1-3 in 23; *Epistulae* 1 in 20; *Carmen Saeculare* in 17; *Odes* 4 in 13; *Epistulae* 2.1 in 13 and 2.2 in 19; *Ars Poetica* anywhere between 12-8 BCE (Horace dies in 8 BCE), though likely composed earlier.

²³ Emily Gowers, "The restless companion: Horace, *Satires* 1 and 2," in *Roman Satire*, ed. Kirk Freudenburg (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 48. Similarly, Freudenburg argues that Horace lacks both the highborn status and the "political luxury" of bluntness that Lucilius enjoyed, "so he introduced an aesthetic refinement that the genre previously did not know or respect: the use of the eraser. Horace packages personal self-limits as aesthetic refinements expressed 'in conversation' that keeps within strict bounds of decorum, in tone, topic, meter, and so on" (10-11 in "Introduction" in *Roman Satire*). Neither Gowers nor Freudenburg look at Horace's writing about writing in his other poetry; in particular, Horace's esteem for the *lima* in *Ars Poetica* does not seem apologetic.

enthusiasm for the *pumex* or *lima* can be something other than a survival mechanism in totalitarian times (and how well that moniker fits Augustus' age is unclear); it signals a will to refinement that is central to, one could even say definitive of, well-developed rhetorical culture.

In the aforementioned works, Horace displays proper writing and editing as slow, full-body events productive of texts worthy of the touch of the few—rather than the sweaty grab of the many—and the glory of Rome. If Horace clung to the file solely out of fear for his well-being, he would not point so often at the stylistic shabbiness and editorial failings of his contemporaries. Diagnosing bad writing as a social ill, Horace acts as a *censor*²⁴ of unbefitting literary conduct (including his own) at a politically transitional time in Rome when all manner of word-workers are devising offices for their skills. When located within the history of rhetoric, Horace's attempts to enforce writerly rectitude testify to the perennial (political, interpersonal, creative) tensions between decorous restraint and the freedom to let it all hang out—loose, hairy, and uncensored.

3.1 THE SERMONIZER (*SERMONES* 1-2)

Classifying Sermo

Of all rhetorical forms, *sermo* is the chattiest. Usually translated as “conversation,” *sermo* can have a moralizing dimension to it, as in our contemporary advisory announcement “I think we need to have a little chat.” Horace accentuates this aspect, but he also explains how a writer bends the flexibility of *sermo* to his situational needs, being “at times harsh (*tristi*), often joking, / upholding the function of either a rhetor or a poet, / or occasionally of an urbane wit,

²⁴ This is precisely what he declares at *Epistulae* 2.2.110 (*censoris...honesti*), which I treat below.

conserving his strength / and minimizing it with deliberation” (*Sermones* 1.10.11-14).²⁵ Years before, Cicero had put the following words about *oratio* (speech) into the mouth of Crassus in *De Oratore*:

nothing is as tender or as flexible or follows so easily wherever you lead it as *oratio*. From *oratio* comes verse, from it comes irregular rhythms; from it also comes loose and varied measures and many types; for not only are the words for *sermo* the same as those for competitive speech, but we also do not use one type for daily life and another for fancy occasions, but we pick them up, lying among us, from a common place, and we form them and shape them to our design as if the softest wax. (3.176-7)

Sermo, like verse, is a sub-set of *oratio*.²⁶ It appeals to Horace because it does not fasten him exclusively to one function (e.g., teaching, exhorting, delighting) or fashioner (e.g., rhetor, poet, philosopher) of speech. In the first three entries in the first book-roll, Horace shows off his philosophical side, correcting such maladjustments as “the grass is always greener” complex (1.1), exceeding or falling below the golden mean (1.2), and not reacting to the virtues and vices of others with consistency (1.3). By 1.4, reader reactions to his “chats” have started to reach him. The sniggering consensus seems to be that Horace spares no one with his tedious sermonizing. “He has hay in his horns (*cornu*): run away!” they apparently say of him (34),

²⁵ Compare these lines and the next few with Cicero’s advisements about *sermo* in *De Officiis*, especially §134, 136, and 137. Ellen Oliensis fruitfully compares Cicero’s *De Officiis* and Horace’s *Ars Poetica* in the final chapter of her book, *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and in a modified version in the collection *Horace: Satires and Epistles*.

²⁶ Richard Weaver famously declared that all “language is sermonic”; see the Johannesen et al. ed. *Language is Sermonic: Richard M. Weaver on the Nature of Rhetoric* (Louisiana State University Press, 1985).

referring to the custom of using hay to mark out dodgy cattle, a custom that should perhaps be extended to dangerous book-rolls.²⁷

In his defense, Horace opts to define his communicative position, first denying himself the title of “poet” (39): “for merely rounding off a verse / you would not deem sufficient, nor would you think anyone who writes anything so near to *sermo*, as I do, / to be a poet” (40-2). He talks in meter. More tangible proof? Take a verse, any verse, of his or Lucilius’, Horace encourages, disassemble and scramble the parts, and even then “you will not find the limbs of a dismembered poet (*disiecti membra poetae*)” (62). Elegantly sifting through all manner of supporting evidence, A. M. Keith has argued that the bountiful presence of body parts in Roman poetry attests to the “wide literary diffusion” of earlier Roman oratorical terminology in the corporeal idiom, which itself arose as a means of distinguishing one form of exemplary Athenian oratory from another.²⁸ (Though, of course, I have previously argued that the bodily nature of rhetorical criticism extends back to Aristophanes, with whom Horace claims readerly familiarity at 1.4.1 and 1.10.16-7.)

Horace is just warming up to provide a grand lesson in genre theory (*genus*, 24; *genus hoc scribendi*, 65) when he snaps himself back to the other critical matter: whether his *sermones* merit the “suspicion” of his detractors (65). He is no informant, taking cruel delight in tattling on others; moreover, he does not supply his *libelli* to pubs or pillars (where book-rolls are displayed), where “the hands of the crowd can sweat on” them, nor does he read them out to anyone except his friends, and only when they force him (71-3; see also 22-5). He is not casting

²⁷ *Cornu*, remember, were decorative knobs on the end of the rollers onto which papyrus sheets were wound. Horace again uses the horn of the bull image (*cornu tauris*) at *Sermones* 2.1.52, to liken his natural defense mechanism when attacked to that of the bull.

²⁸ Keith, “Slender Verse”, 42. She leads off her article with that famous line from Horace. Cicero outlines the neo-Atticism debates in *Brutus*, but elements are also present in *De Oratore* and *Orator*.

aspersions far and wide, and in no way are these critics right who accuse him of carrying out his office with perverse relish (cf. “*et hoc studio pravus facis*,” 79²⁹). No one who knows him can authorize such an attack against him, Horace claims. Moreover, he counter-charges that his detractors frequently laugh at nasty remarks worse than Horace’s and themselves engage in suggestive *praeterito* that is far more damaging to reputations than Horace’s light ribbings. “That such viciousness be far from my sheets (*chartis*) / and, first off, from my mind, if anything I promise / can be regarded as true, I promise,” he pledges (100-3).

His final flourish involves dear old dad. “If I am more free (*liberius*) / in what I say, if perhaps more jocular (than is seemly), this (looseness) you will justly afford goodwill” (103-5), as his excellent father taught him to turn observances of the foibles and vices of others into instructions for living uprightly. Force of habit makes Horace think and “talk” as he does. This appeal to the traditional Roman intolerance for goofy behavior also endows his “chats” with the patina of wisdom. But this is not to say Horace does not suffer from even minimal vices (*mediocribus vitiis*, 130-1). He closes the poem with a representative anecdote about his odd habitual behavior of privately and publically debating with himself through “shut lips” (*compressis labris*, 138) about all manner of interpersonal behaviors and modes of comportment. (One wonders: How telling are these sealed-up lips of external constraints on *oratio*? Or does Horace’s self-searching introspection arise from an innocent idiosyncrasy?) Whenever he frees up a bit of leisure time, he plays around with his sheets (*illudo chartis*, 139) and refines his unspoken debates. If people have a problem with that—Horace skips out on how these sheets come to leave the security of his small reading group—they will have to answer to the many poets who will come to Horace’s aid and try to convert his critics into his fellows (141-3).

²⁹ “*Pravus facis*” could also be an aesthetic assessment of his verses—“poorly made”—as Horace describes awful verses written as a tribute to him as “*prave factis*” at *Epistulae* 2.1.266.

Now that I have briefly assessed Horace's position on and within the sermonic genre of writing, I narrow in on editing, the seemingly paradoxical feature of his "chats" that he claims distinguishes him from his Roman sermonic predecessor, Lucilius, and from many Romans poeticizing in his own time. Horace shows no sign of bother at the apparent incongruity of carefully edited conversations. For one, he tells us his sheets record the polished results of his playfully agonistic conversations with himself about moral issues. Second, the sermonic mode entails neither vapidness nor unsophisticated blather, but should be thought of as the tidy expression of a well-ordered soul. For precisely that reason, Cicero had emphasized *sermo* as no less a worthy area for rhetorical study and practice than oratory in his *De Officiis* (§132). Horace, in the second book-roll of *Sermones*, explains that a true *sermo* does not involve "villas or homes of other men, / or whether Lepos dances well or not," but matters that are of greater pertinence and about which it is bad to be ignorant (2.6.71-3), including writing *recte*. *Sermo* should not be a trade in trashy gossip.

Editing a *sermo* seems to be a relatively new activity, however. Though "witty and *emunctae naris*"—literally "of refined nose," meaning having good taste—Lucilius "composed hard/harsh (*durus*) verses" (1.4.8). His glibness is the main cause. "Often in a single hour, / as if a big deal, he would dictate two hundred lines while standing on one foot; / and as he flowed along turbidly (*lutulentus*), there was much you would like to toss out; / he was wordy (*garrulus*) and unwilling to bear the labor (*laborem*) of writing, / of writing well (*recte*): as for (writing) much (*multum*), I care nothing for that" (1.4.9-13). Compositionally, Lucilius gushes forth—and to a fast-scribbling amanuensis, no less—without filtering out his impurities, and Horace's use of the general second person singular (*velles*) to explain any (refined) reader's desire to sift through

Lucilius' muddy gunk to get to the good stuff suggests that Lucilius did not tidy his torrent before publishing. Horace does not heap any further critique upon Lucilius in 1.4, but what he opines here seems to rile up readers with a taste for the traditional.

Beset by Lucilius diehards (blowhards, more like), Horace returns to his judgments about his forepoet in 1.10 (the last poem of *Sermones* 1), defending them with no apparent urgency until we reach the end: "Go, boy, and quickly append these words to my little book-roll" (92). Horace gives the final impression of working under a strict deadline, as if his book-roll had already been prepared for his chosen few readers but he could not resist a retort, and one to which his detractors will not get a chance to respond before it, as we say, "goes to press." (The debate continues in *Sermones* 2.1, however.)

Likely punning on his earlier depiction of Lucilius as dictating on one foot and not composing with elegance, Horace launches into the poem with a provocation (1-4): "Of course I said the verses of Lucilius run on un-put-together feet (*incomposito pede*). / Who is such a mindless fan of Lucilius, / that he would not acknowledge this? Yet that same (Lucilius), because he rubbed down (*defricuit*) the city with much salt, / is praised on the very same sheet (*charta*)." Horace's critics think they have caught him in a contradiction, since in 1.4 he both critiques Lucilius' composition choices and compliments Lucilius' appropriate handling of astringency. As far as I can tell, this curious, citywide "salt rub" receives only passing mention in the scholarship on this poem; it seems to describe an antecedent of Catullus' abrasive poetics. Salt rubs are currently used as exfoliating beauty treatments at high-end spas—not quite what Lucilius had in mind, surely, although Horace describes Lucilius later on as having a knack for peeling back the skin of others (*Sermones* 2.1.62-65). Lucilius scours the city, both sniffing out its foibles and giving them a rough treatment.

Even professing to fall short of Lucilius' example and not to dare pull off the much-deserved crown that "sticks" on his predecessor's temples, Horace displays a great deal of contextual charity in his elaborated assessments of Lucilius. As Lucilius in his time poked fun at his own predecessors (like Accius and Ennius), cannot we inquire into Lucilius methods by asking whether his little verses are not "more well-done" and "more soft" due to a fault of either the man or his "rough" subject matter (56-8)? Had Lucilius written in hexameters, his thoughts would flow better, but even then, he probably would have spouted out "two hundreds verses before dinner and one hundred verses after." In short, his problem does not lie solely with his feet. Horace then inserts a quick tale about a poet whose compositional flow runneth so over that his scroll cases (*capsis*) and books (*librisque*) provided enough suitable material for his funeral pyre. That deviously said, Horace willingly:

concedes that Lucilius was polite (*comis*) and urbane, and concedes he was more filed (*limatior*) / than (one might expect of) an author of a poem-type as yet undeveloped (*rudis*), untried even by the Greeks, / and more filed than the crowd of older poets: but he, / if he had fallen by fate into our time, / would rub away (*detereret*) much of his (*writing*), would cut back (*recideret*) everything that / dragged on beyond *perfectum*, and in making verses / he would often scratch his head and gnaw his nails to the quick (*vivos et roderet unguis*). (64-72)

This final description of an editorial body closely resembles Carolyn Marvin's depiction of the typically unseen body behind a text: "[i]n addition to putting pen to paper or finger to key, skin is pulled and scratched, nails, lips, and mustaches are bitten, noses, ears, and faces are picked, fingernails are peeled, hair is plucked and twisted."³⁰ Note in Horace's depiction of the editorial body that the middle-man amanuensis is out of the picture. Lucilius pioneered a genre—and most beginnings are rough ones—but finishing a poem is a rough business also. If he'd been plopped into "our" time, he would no doubt wear down both of his corpora in the pursuit of

³⁰ Marvin, "The Body of the Text", 132.

perfection. What about “our age” would compel Lucilius to be more careful, even chewing away nervously on his nails? How one interprets this recontextualization of Lucilius depends wholly on how one assesses Horace’s comfort level and reasons for editing. The peek at his own body at work that Horace offers in *Sermones* 2.3, which I will come to shortly, reveals a great deal. But that Horace begins to bring 1.10 to a close by shifting into second person sermonizing mode shows there are reasons—not limited to himself exclusively—why one should edit: “often you must turn your *stilus* (*stilum vertas*), if you want to write something worthy of repeated readings, / and you must not work (*labores*) for the amazement of the crowd, / but be content with few readers (*paucis lectoribus*)” (72-4). “Turning the *stilus*” is idiomatic for and descriptive of the act of rubbing out words provisionally etched into a wax tablet, and a writer should direct his editorial efforts toward the page (that is, not the stage) and toward choosy readers. Such lofty aims (especially when so haughtily exposed and expressed) bring trouble on a writer, however. Though all sorts of people try to drag Horace down (*moveat* (move him), *cruciet* (crucify him), *laedat* (rub him open)), so long as Maecenas, Virgil, and similar men with high standards approve (*probet, laudet*) of his poems, such as they are (*qualiacumque*, 88),³¹ Horace will keep at it. And so he does.

The Point and Paddle of the Stilus

“To write in plain, vigorous language one has to think fearlessly, and if one thinks fearlessly one cannot be politically orthodox.”

George Orwell, “The Prevention of Literature”

Horace opens the second book-roll of his “chats” by ostensibly seeking out some legal advice about his writings, telling the lawyer Trebatius: “there are some who think I come off as

³¹ Recall this is the same word Catullus uses in c. 1 to express reception jitters.

too sharp (*nimis acer*) in my satire and / stretch (*tendere*) the work beyond lawful bounds (*lege*), while the other contingent thinks everything I've composed to be without sinew (*sine nervis*), / and that verses like mine / can be produced at rate of a thousand per day. Trebatius, / what should I do? Advise me" (1-5). Is Horace reaching beyond what's permitted, or does he lack the backbone to do so? Do his verses seem effortlessly produced in the worst sense? (That's not a legal question, of course.) Kirk Freudenburg has argued that this poem is less a discussion about morality or legality as about forms and norms of composition, and undertaken with choice stylistic rhetorical terms whose sexual nether meanings Horace teases out.³² For example, many of the verbs and adjectives in lines 1-2 can also refer to sexual virility, and Horace even plays around with the penile implications of his cognomen, assuring himself that the words of Flaccus (literally, a flaccid one) will penetrate when the time is right (*dextro tempore, Flacci / verba*, 18-9). (Penetrate what? Caesar's "attentive ears" (19)!) Freudenburg locates the language of rhetorical-cum-sexual potency and impotency throughout the poem and demonstrates convincingly that these words continue to flex and relax in rhetorical works after Horace's time, such as Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* and Tacitus' *Dialogus de Oratoribus*.

Still, since rhetoric's aesthetic terminology often—and rhetorical practice always—dovetails with ethical issues, we do well to see how Horace's words stand up under Trebatius' pressing questions. Trebatius first advises Horace to cease writing altogether, or, if he cannot abstain, why not channel his energies into writing epic verses in celebration of Caesar's varied achievements, like "wise" Lucilius did of Scipio, the great republican general and litterateur? That would be a much "*rectius*" (more appropriate, correct, erect?, 21) use of Horace's talents.

³² Kirk Freudenburg, "Horace's Satiric Program and the Language of Contemporary Theory in *Satires* 2.1," *The American Journal of Philology* 111.2 (Summer 1990): 187-203. The words he focuses on can be found in *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and Cicero's three *rhetorica*.

But Horace claims to be insufficiently strong (*vires / deficiunt*, 12-3) for such a big job, stuck in his ways, and delighted with Lucilius' satire. Lucilius gives so freely of himself in his book-rolls (*libris*), treating them like buddies to whom he can display "his whole life, as if on a votive tablet" (33). Being from Venusia, Horace (jokes that he) cannot resist poking with his *stilus* anyone who lays a finger on him, "to cut a long story short: whether tranquil old age / awaits me or death flies around me with black wings, / wealthy or without resources, in Rome, or if such a thing were ordered, exile, / whatever the color of my life, I must write" (57-60).³³ When Trebatius warns of the certainty of accusations, Horace acknowledges that he lacks the protective distinction of Lucilius' social rank and trifling playfulness, while holding out that he (Horace) "lives among the great." The poem closes as Horace and Trebatius pun on "*mala*" and "*bona*" poems and, one imagines, snort that so long as Caesar judges the recipient of a "*mala*" poem of Horace's to have deserved it, and Horace to have maintained his integrity (*integer*, 85), Horace will never be convicted of the ancient analogue of libel.

According to most estimates, five years elapsed between the circulation of the first book-roll of the *Sermones* and the debut of the second. During that time, the second triumvirate had lost two *vir*i: Octavian, of course, was left standing. Also during this time, Maecenas bestowed upon Horace a sizeable farm in the country, a place to scudder about like a country mouse³⁴ and nibble on books, as such creatures do. The self-satisfied tone ringing out at the end of 2.1 becomes more of a dinning as we roll through the rest of the text. As Ellen Oliensis, among others, has noticed, each installment of this second sermonic book-roll pits Horace against the grating voice of another's reason, and Horace uses their chattiness as a medium through which to

³³ Both "*exsul*" and "*color*" appear in Ovid's very first poem from exile, *Tristia* 1.1, which I discuss in the next chapter.

³⁴ Horace presents the fable of the city mouse and the country mouse at the end of *Sermones* 2.6.

talk through his recent status boost.³⁵ For my purposes, 2.3 is a chat worth listening in on.

When visiting Horace at his country house, a bearded Stoic friend called Damasippus sees that Horace is having a hard time writing, and projects a verbal reflection of what he sees back to Horace:

So rarely do you write, that not four times in a whole year / do you call for parchment (*membranam*), and reweaving (*retexens*) all that you have written, / you grow angry with yourself, because even when full-up on wine and sleep / you still produce not one worthy *sermo*. / What will happen? / And you fled here from the Saturnalia itself? / Since you're sobered up, say something worthy of your promises: / start. Nothing presents itself: / in vain your pens (*calami*) are blamed, and the undeserving wall gets a work out (*laborat*), / seemingly born to take the anger of gods and poets. (2.3.1-8)

According to Damasippus, Horace spends most of his time working out the same pattern of words over and over, hesitating to move from wax to a more permanent medium. (Or simply reworking his first book-roll of *Sermones*?) Even here and now, fully relaxed and removed from the bustle of city life: zip. Frustrated, Horace barks at his tools and pounds the wall in a fury fit for Jupiter. He has even schlepped his favorite book-rolls with him out to the country as good and goading company, but to no avail.³⁶ Before being turned on to philosophy, Damasippus had been an evaluator of art objects, so his opinion counts for something, and even Horace exclaims that this wise guy knows him well (*bene*, 17).

Why all the mussing and fussing? Why, *really*, doesn't Horace just let himself flow/go like Lucilius? Were we in an Orwellian mood, we might frame this breakdown as representative of what writers suffer in times of political clampdown as they censor themselves into silence.

³⁵ See Ellen Oliensis, "*Ut arte emendaturus fortunam*: Horace, Nasidienus and the art of satire," in *The Roman Cultural Revolution*, ed. Habinek and Schiesaro, 90-104 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Freudenburg's "Introduction: Roman satire," in *Roman Satire*, 11-12; Gowers' "The restless companion: Horace, *Satires* 1 and 2," in *Roman Satire*, 57-61.

³⁶ Horace ranks reading in the countryside at the top of his list of favorite activities in *Sermones* 2.6.61 and *Epistulae* 1.18.109-110.

And, yet, Horace has managed to squeeze out the very item from which we draw this hasty conclusion (and it's the longest satire in either book-roll). Not only its mere state of being but its conclusion encourages a different view. Damasippus —by Horace's design—diagnoses Horace as suffering from, in essence, short man syndrome:

Listen up. First, / you are building (*aedificas*),³⁷ this is to say, you are imitating tall (*longo*) men, even though / at most altogether you measure two feet, and all the same, / as if you were bigger in body (*corpore*), you laugh at Turbo in his armor, / spirited and strutting: how are you less ridiculous than he is? (308-311)

Damasippus then recites an appropriate fable of Aesop—the Ox and the Frogs—whereby, a mama frog, in her panicky efforts to demonstrate with her body the size of the great big ox that has stomped her babies, nearly bursts. Horace's general behavior these days approaches the mama frog's in self-aggrandizement, but his poems (*poemata*, 321) are really what puff him up to the point of popping.³⁸ The poet needs to deflate himself and resume his proper dimensions; as Horace himself teasingly concedes in *Sermones* 2.1.18, he *is* Flaccus, after all. Moreover, Damasippus pokes at Horace's raging temper and “*cultum maiorem censu*”, cultivation/flair greater than his station (324); a passing shot at Horace's socioeconomic background, maybe, but all the more possibly a dig at Horace's namby-pamby preoccupation with editing a genre of

³⁷ Compare this building language to that in the poems that book-end the first unit of his *Odes* (that is, book-rolls 1-3). At the end of *Odes* 1.1, Horace asks Maecenas (to whom the poem is addressed) to “insert” (35) him among the Greek lyric greats. Joseph Farrell has emphasized the materiality of this request, that is, that Horace asks Maecenas to insert Horace's physical book-rolls in the same bookcase as Sappho and Alcaeus (“Horace's Body, Horace's Books”). Horace gasps excitedly that being in such company will buoy him up such that his head hits the stars; he's the first skyscraper. *Odes* 3.30 opens with Horace's most famous mock rock *topos*, as I showed at the end of chapter 1. For a very capable analysis of the architectural and construction language in *Odes* 4, see Steven L. Jones, “*Ut Architectura Poesis*: Horace, *Odes* 4, and the Mausoleum of Augustus,” Unpublished Dissertation (Austin: University of Texas: 2008).

³⁸ Bursting from stretching beyond one's limits occurs again in *Epistulae* 1.19.15-6, where Horace describes the rhetor Iarbitas “bursting” (*rupit*) as a result of over-applying himself to be considered urbane and straining to be considered eloquent (*disertus*).

poem that's supposed to be harsh, improvisational, and provocative, all qualities a Stoic like Damasippus would value highly.

3.2 A MAN OF LETTERS (*EPISTULAE* 1-2)

With a vast reluctance, I vault over Horace's lovely lyric productions—*Odes* 1-3, the *Carmen Saeculare*, and *Odes* 4—and land on his so-called “letters”, wherein, among other things, he reacts to the reception of his lyric works. Why skip the *Odes*? Because lyric poetry aspires to the unwritten, unedited spontaneity of song or speech, Horace infrequently draws attention to the material methods with which such effects are achieved. In all 88 poems of *Odes* 1-3, Horace uses the verb *scribo* (write) only twice, both times in 1.6, where he rhetorically recuses himself from writing epic poetry, claiming to be too puny for such heaviness (*tenues grandia*, 9).³⁹ In the 15 poems of *Odes* 4, Horace refers to his sheets in two poems (*chartae*, 4.8.21; *chartis* in 4.9.31) and “working” (*laborem*, 4.2.29) and “forming” (*pingo*, 4.2.32) their contents in another. But those few examples serve to emphasize the comparative predominance of verbs of voice. In the “small lexicon” of ancient modes of poetic communication that he proposes in *The Roman World of Song*, Thomas Habinek includes only *cano* (I sing), *loquor* (I say, talk about), *dico* (I speak, tell), and *canto* (I sing of, play), a nod to this abundant orality.⁴⁰

³⁹ Compare with the *recusationes* at *Sermones* 2.1 and *Epistulae* 2.1.245-259 (*recusent* at 259). The similar position of these poems is likely no editorial coincidence. See Charles F. Ahern, Jr., “Horace’s Rewriting of Homer in *Carmen* 1.6,” *Classical Philology* 86.4 (Oct. 1991): 301-314, for an analysis of the various layers of diminution in this poem.

⁴⁰ Habinek, *The Roman World of Song*, 59. Michèle Lowrie has hassled him (in her review of this book for *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*) for leaving out “*scribo*”, but he did say it was a “small lexicon”; moreover, there is a wonderful chapter in *The Politics of Latin Literature* about writing poets (chapter 5). There are several rhetoric-based or rhetoric-friendly studies about the *Odes*; see especially: Francis M. Dunn, “Rhetorical Approaches to Horace’s *Odes*,” *Arethusa* 28 (1995): 165-176; Oliensis, *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority*; Gregson Davis, *Polyhymnia*:

The *Epistulae*, by contrast, are written objects through and through. Horace opens the first *epistula* by resting his voice, as it were, and taking up pen and paper again, as the “letters” attest. Letters are the primary means of keeping in touch over distance, a distance that Horace struggles to maintain. Comparing himself to a retired gladiator or an aging racehorse one contest away from blundering (*peccet*, 9) and coming apart at the seams, Horace tells Maecenas it is time he (Horace) put aside his “verses and other playthings” (10) and turn his care (*cura*) to what is “true and decorous” (11). In his typical doubling way, Horace uses verbs that also pertain to composition—“*condo et compono*” (12)—to describe how he is “storing up/writing” and “putting together/composing” philosophical learning that he can soon draw upon, rather than producing verse.⁴¹ The *Epistulae* themselves both underline and undermine this inward retreat. An attitude of *attempted* withdrawal, of *attempting* to draw strength from philosophical stores from within rather than seek accolades from without, pervades the first book-roll. Why the sardonically slanted italics? Horace dramatizes the voices that disturb him (like Maecenas beckoning for him (1.7)), the reader criticisms that reach him (1.19), and even the book-roll that asserts a will of its own (1.20), all tugging him out of philosophical peace and quiet.⁴²

The vocabulary of literary materiality saturates both epistolary book-rolls, presenting a challenge for one trying to squeeze sense out of them in a delicate manner. For instance, Horace writes to an orator friend, urging him to be vigilant in his philosophical pursuits, too, and to call

The Rhetoric of Horatian Lyric Discourse (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); and Lowrie, *Horace's Narrative Odes*.

⁴¹ Another interpretation: Horace does not want to continue on with competitive and playful exchanges, he simply wants to word-hoard (“hoard” being another meaning of both *condo* and *compono*; a double hoard, then).

⁴² See Oliensis, *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority*, chapter 4 for a wonderful reading of the *Epistulae*. It bears emphasizing that Horace was studying philosophy when he was recruited into military service by Brutus; in *Epistulae* 2.2.45-6, he recounts that “*dura tempora*” wrested him from “the groves of Academe”. He’s now making up for lost time, or at least trying to.

for “*librum cum lumine*” (book-rolls along with candlelight) so that he might read every morning before entering the forensic fray (1.2.35); teases a poet who keeps thieving verses from book-rolls in the Palatine library (1.3.14ff); whines about wanting to stay holed up in his farmhouse to read (1.7.12); nervously messengers some sealed volumes to Augustus (1.13);⁴³ and encourages a poet friend who wants to know how to keep his patron happy to abandon his poems without a fuss any time his patron invites him out (1.18). Because Horace endows the last two poems of *Epistulae* 1 and the only two poems of *Epistulae* 2 with a spaciousness about his larger poetic program that the other poems in the first book-roll lack, I focus on them and dip back when appropriate.

The only letter in the entire assemblage addressed not to a person but to a personified book-roll, 1.20 impatiently taps its feet and demands attention:

Toward Vertumnus and Janus,⁴⁴ book-roll (*liber*),⁴⁵ you seem to be looking, / so that you might sell yourself (*prostes*), tarted up by the pumice of the Sosii (*Sosiorum pumice mundus*). / You hate the keys and seals so agreeable to the modest;⁴⁶ / you moan about being shown to so few (*paucis*) and you praise publicity (*communia*): / you were not brought up that way. Away, then, down to that place you itch to go. / Not once I send you out (*emisso*) can you return. ‘What, wretched me, have I done? / What did I want?’ you will say, when someone tears into you (*te laeserit*),⁴⁷ and you find / yourself forced into a confined space, when your lover (*amator*), having had plenty, grows languid. (1-8)

⁴³ See *Epistulae* 2, lines 1-4 and 219-221, where Horace chides himself for bringing his book-rolls to Augustus when the latter is busy looking out for larger Roman interests or plumb tuckered out.

⁴⁴ The area of Rome where book-roll stalls were stationed.

⁴⁵ For a treatment of the book-roll as a pretty slave-boy eager to be set loose (*liber* with a short ‘i’, as we see here, means “book-roll”, where *liber* with a long ‘i’ means “freed thing”) to find a new household, see Lee T. Percy, “The Personification of the Text and Augustan Poetics in *Epistles* 1.20,” *The Classical World* 87.5 (May-June 1994): 458. Horace carries this slave-boy language (if, indeed, that’s what it is) into *Epistulae* 2.2. As Ovid plays around with in his exile poems, *liber* with a long ‘i’ can also mean “child” (though it’s admittedly rare to show up in the singular form—*liberi*, children, is more common), which, remember, is what Socrates called a little book-roll that lacks the protection of a “father” in the *Phaedrus*.

⁴⁶ Horace’s other book-rolls stay shut up in secure cases.

⁴⁷ As Aurelius and Furius did to Catullus, to their apparent detriment.

The Sosii brothers, book-roll-hawking literary agents, have outfitted Horace's work with the sheen of surface appeal (which suits their purposes more than his), and now it does not want to roll around in his small social circle but to strut its stuff in the streets. Horace, however, has not prepared it for the pawing/mauling it will encounter there. The brothers' *pumex* has overpowered Horace's *lima*; now, (the) many want to fondle the text, whether they can handle it or not. Doubtless the smooth book-roll will hook someone, but how long before the "lover" loses interest and, having rolled the *liber* up tightly, tosses it aside with a yawn? But, Horace continues, the book-roll will not end its journey there; it will continue to be "dear" to Rome until the fading and wrinkling (which beset both fleshy and fibrous corpora) combine with all the stains⁴⁸ from the caressing⁴⁹ hands of the masses to render it a raggedy old thing. Then, it will sit silently and sluggishly as bookworms graze upon it, or it will flee to Utica, or be sent as a captive to Ilerda, that is, get shipped to the boonies. Horace will laugh as the book-roll, now babbling in senility, helps boys at the far reaches of Roman influence learn their ABCs.⁵⁰

This contemptuous cackle represents one way of surrendering authorial control. Mostly, though, Horace expresses befuddlement at how a poet can possibly get any sort of purchase in Rome, when everyone to whom he might appeal has different (and oftentimes fast-fading) literary enthusiasms. In 1.1, Horace complains to Maecenas that the people have misattributed his fondness for the few to snobbery; instead, he claims, and not too diplomatically, that the crowd is "a multi-headed monster" (76) that he does not know how to handle. (This formulation

⁴⁸ Percy: "*Sordescere* (11) suggests not only the literal effect of much handling on a new volume, but also a figurative obscuration that popularity brings with it. If large numbers of indiscriminating readers, misled by its attractive polish and by the charm of its language, handle or mishandle the text, it will become difficult to see what it says" (461).

⁴⁹ *Contrectatus* (11) can also mean "having sexual intercourse with."

⁵⁰ Horace seems to express distaste at the prospect of being read out in the classroom, yet, in *Epistulae* 2.1.126, he credits poetry with "fashioning the tender, babbling mouth of boys".

and reaction somewhat resemble modern-day tremblings at “the long tail” and the threat its centrifugality potentially poses to communal cohesion.) In 2.2.61-64,⁵¹ Horace uses a cooking metaphor to express his frustration. “It seems to me pretty close to having three dinner guests who disagree”; since they all have different palates, what pleases one diner, the other two find acrid and repulsive. How can one cater to a multiplicity of tastes?

This is an acute rhetorical anxiety, of course, and one by which poets who compose badly are untroubled. Very much like Catullus’ Sufferus, they “take joy in their scribbling and worship themselves and, / if you are quiet” when they ask for a critical opinion, “they praise whatever they have written, the blissful creatures” (2.2.106-8). On the other hand, “he who desires to make a legitimate poem (*legitimum ... poema*), / when he picks up his wax tablets (*tabulis*) also picks up the character of an honest censor (*censoris ... honesti*); / he will dare, if words fall short in splendor or / lack weight or are deemed unworthy of their position, / to move them (*movere*) from their place, although, unwilling to go, / they linger on within the precincts of Vesta” (109-114). Is all this trouble—word violence, really—worth it? “I should prefer to seem a giddy and sluggish writer,” Horace declares, “if only my bad things (*mala*) delighted me or at least duped me, / than to be wise and snarling” (126-8). He then relates a tale of a distinguished gentleman who acted faultlessly in all areas of his life, but exhibited one peculiarity: it was his occasional pleasure to sit in an empty theatre, where, he believed, he was enjoying the finest dramatic performances ever put forth. After some family members intervened, shaking him out of it and giving him drugs to fully “restore” him, he chided them for depriving him of his one true pleasure and the “most gratifying error of my mind” (128-140). But Horace flicks this story from his mind and again embraces wisdom, along with an old habit: silently talking to himself

⁵¹ This poem, like *Epistulae* 1.3, is addressed to Julius Florus, part of a literary circle around the future emperor Tiberius.

about moral matters and committing his “chats” to *chartae* (145ff). He cannot, will not, dupe himself.

He will, though, call in heavy reinforcements to lift his sagging morale. Addressed to Maecenas, 1.19 is one big petulant pout about the reception of *Odes* 1-3 (*Odes* 4 was issued separately). Several responses irk Horace. One, the poetic productions of a slew of imitators, who want to copy his corpus so much that they would guzzle exsanguinating concoctions were Horace to grow pale, just so they could resemble him. “O imitators, servile herd, often does your big fuss (*tumultus*) move my / bile, often my sense of humor!” (19-20). Part melancholic, part amused, Horace proceeds to credit himself—as he does in *Odes* 3.30—with being the first to step on alien land “*pressi*⁵² *pede*” (with precise/concise foot, 22)—that is, to place shapely Latin feet into lyric meters that had been the Greeks’ territory—and lead “the swarm” (23) behind him. That he brought forth “novelties” (*immemorata*) that are “read by the eyes and held in the hands of the well-born (*ingenuis*)” boosts his spirits (33-4). The two touchstones of this brief self-congratulation, novelty and textuality, become bedrocks in *Epistulae* 2.1, which I will handle shortly.

The second reader-response irritant induces tears (41) instead of sighs: the *ingratus lector*, quite different from the *ingenuus* one. These types praise and love him at home, but carp at him as soon as they step over the threshold. Horace chalks up this changeability to public expectations about poetic presence—and presents—in public. Ungracious readers are not content with the delights his book-rolls provide and want him “to hunt for the votes of the public, who blow this way and that, / at the cost of meals and gifts of well-worn clothing” (37-8). It is public appeals to their power to choose—which is another translation of *lecto*, read—that such

⁵² “*Pressi*” is one adjective Cicero uses in his *rhethorica* to describe the rhetorical style that results from the file.

readers want. Horace, however, refuses to act as a desperate politico. Moreover, he does not seek out “noble writers” with whom he can pontificate about, as we mockingly say today, “litrachure” or kiss up to *grammatici* who lecture publically about poetry (39-41). All this keeping himself to himself makes the public suspicious. If, for example, he says, “To a tightly-packed theatre / I’m ashamed to recite my unworthy writings and attribute weight to trifles,” they say, “Laugh it up; for the ears of Jove you keep your writings / aside: for you believe that you alone dispense the honey of poetry, / you alone are pretty” (41-45). The ungracious readers (mis?)take Horace’s bashfulness for a holier-than-thou hold out of his sweet honey for Augustus. So what of it? Horace momentarily considers sticking his nose in the air like the snob he is, but decides he would get clawed, and so calls for a truce instead. The retired gladiator from 1.1 wants to stay that way.

Only, he does enter the fray again (are we seeing a pattern yet?), issuing another book of *Odes* (book 4) before writing up the two long “letters” that form the second book-roll of the *Epistulae*. He begins his address to Augustus (2.1) by subtly linking his poetic work with Augustus’ political labors—Augustus “ornaments” the customary ways of *res Italia* and “emends” them with laws⁵³—and acknowledging it would be a sin (*peccem*, 3) against the public good if he were to occupy Augustus with a long talk (*longo sermone*, 4). This mingling of poetic and political missions foreshadows the content of the letter, pushed forward by a commitment to getting to the point (which I shall endeavor to match). And, indeed, on the matter of Roman poetry’s development—which turns out to be the main topic of the letter—Horace says that if, as many suppose, it parallels Greece’s in that the earliest writers are the best, then “*non est quod*

⁵³ Too, *The Idea of Ancient Literary Criticism*, beat me to the punch: “The state is akin to a poetic text that a poet might adorn and correct” (160).

multa loquamur” (30), the discussion can end right there. He assumes, though, that Augustus wants to hear more, and, for his part, Horace certainly has a stake.

The undue deference to and preference for older poetry comes mostly from the people, Horace charges, who can be “correct” in certain poetic judgments but “blunder” (*peccat*, 63) in thinking poetry is like wine (34). Those among them who deem ancient poetry unrefined join Horace and “Jove” in that assessment.⁵⁴ Ancient poetry deserves honor, but not endless goodwill (78) and immunity from criticism; if the Greeks had resisted novelty, what now would be old? And what would the public have to read and wear out by constant handling (*legeret tereretque*, 92), each to his own, if not for a profusion of new material? In the peaceful lull following the Persian War, Horace recounts, Greece took to playing and, with a flirt here and a flit there, took up temporary enthusiasm for all sorts of cultural pursuits. On the other hand, in its former times of peace, Romans used to conduct themselves with *decorum*, tending to their business, respecting their elders, and guiding the young and impressionable; however, now everyone is seized with an unseemly zeal for “*scribendi*” (109). Even Horace, who “affirms” that he writes no verses (that was his claim in *Sermones*), requests his pen, sheets, and scroll case first thing in the morning (113). Ignorance of a skill often discourages its practice—in navigation, medicine, and carpentry, for example—but the “*indocti doctique*” (learned and unlearned) both scribble poems (117).⁵⁵ Augustan *pax* has ushered in a wobbly poetic age, though, if Athens’ experience is any

⁵⁴ Horace has much fondness for the poems of Livius, for example, but cannot believe anyone could deem that old Roman poet “*emendata videri / pulchraque et exactis minimum distantia*” (to seem to have been emended and pretty and not far off from perfect, 71-2); though some of the words attain “decorum” (73), those few attainments “unjustly carry off and sell the whole poem” (75).

⁵⁵ Poems, though, are not useless. Poetry has a pedagogic function, which Horace explains in 118-138, including among its merits the power to “correct” roughness, envy, and anger in those who read it (129), thereby emending common character flaws.

guide, the poeticizing craze will soon give way to a mania for something else. Meanwhile, standards are needed.

Horace returns to tracing Roman poetry's genealogy back through the Greeks, kicking it off by noting the irony that: "Greece, made captive, captured her savage victor, and brought the arts / into untamed Latium" (156-7); the domination was not one-sided. Greek influence on Latin poetry first strongly asserts itself after the Punic wars, when certain Latin-writing poets take a shine to Sophocles and Aeschylus. Goaded on by natural spunk and sharpness (*acer*, 165), each poet produces results with which he is "happy", "but, unknowing, he deems blotting (*lituram*, erasure) demeaning (*turpem*) and fears it" (167). Writing in a different genre of poetry than Lucilius, these early Roman tragic poets share in his lack of love for the *lima*. And not Lucilius' glib disinterest but something more resembling moral outrage keeps their pages eraser-free (and not error-free).

Though Horace claims to be impressed with the artistry of poets of his time who write for the stage, he professes horror at the rowdy behavior of the theatre audience, making such a spectacle of themselves that Democritus (the so-called "laughing philosopher") would watch *them* and not the play were he around. Playwrights might as well tell their tales to a "deaf donkey" (199-200). For this reason, Horace turns to poets who "prefer to entrust themselves to readers, / rather than deal with the snobbishness of arrogant spectators" (214-5). And Augustus should mind them also, if he "wishes to fill with book-rolls (*libris*) that gift worthy of Apollo," the library on the Palatine (216-7), since any "spur" from him will be a great motivator (217). Such stimulus, however, would produce yet more poets to whose various sensitivities Augustus would be exposed: "we are wounded if a friend has dared to criticize a single verse; / we roll back (*revolvimus*) to places already recited, even when not requested; / we lament that our labors

go unnoticed / along with the fine (*tenui*) texture of our poetic productions; / we hope it will come to this very situation, that, as soon as / you learn we are forming (*pingere*) poems, and when convenient and of your own accord, / you will summon us and drive away our poverty and compel⁵⁶ us to write” (221-228). It is Augustus’ approval and the magnitude of his achievements (rather than the threat of some poet-shaped iron maiden) that do the compelling.

Augustus must be choosy, though, if he wants to avoid the mistake mighty Alexander committed when he forbade all but the best visual artists to render his physical likeness but entrusted the form of his reputation to a beloved but second-rate verbal artist, for whose “*incultis*” and “poorly born” verses Alexander paid dearly, literally and figuratively (232-244). A powerful man’s personal affection for a poet can be disastrous. But Horace encourages Augustus in his support of Virgil and Varius, the epic poets,⁵⁷ and regrets that his own “chats crawl upon the ground” (250-1) rather than soar on epic wing. Yet, he knows his own strength (259) and, besides:

I’m not caught up in any duty that could weigh me down, nor desirous to / have my face deformed by placement in wax / nor to be graced by verses poorly (*prave*) made, / lest I’m expected to blush at the clumsy (*pingui*) gift once it’s given, and, / with my very own writer, laid out in a closed scroll case, / be carried into that block that sells incense and perfumes / and pepper and whatever else is wrapped in useless sheets (*chartis ineptis*). (264-270)

Wax keepsakes of poets’ visages—whose resemblance to traditional death-masks Horace plays up—were one part of the cult of personality that certain poets encouraged or merely had to contend with, as were tributes by lesser poets. Horace here describes a funeral march of sorts: a poor eulogy read in his honor, this *imago* crammed into a scroll case and carried through the streets, and its deposit amongst other marketplace items (no fish, though, as with Catullus).

⁵⁶ This is one of those words that can be troubling: does Augustus *force* poets to write what he wants or is he merely an encouraging spur?

⁵⁷ There is another mock rock *topos* at 247-250.

Throughout this poem, Horace parallels his interests with Augustus', even making the dodging of awful poets who want to praise them a shared concern. Rather than refer to his *lima* and the refinement its use brings about, Horace instead focuses on past poets who did not compose carefully and, in one case, caused embarrassment for a person of extreme eminence. Moreover, he appeals to Augustus' most recently commissioned library, whose contents are a reflection on him. If Rome truly has arrived "*ad summum fortunae*" (at fortune's summit, 32), then it requires literature commensurate with its lofty status and should not settle for uncouth and substandard productions. In his final published work, the *Ars Poetica*, Horace ostensibly instructs two scions of an aristocratic family on poetic propriety but all the while addresses Rome on the bad habits it must emend if Latin literature is ever to overtake what came before it.

3.3 ANIMA SANA IN CORPORE SANO (ARS POETICA)

"...*praecipue sanus*⁵⁸..." ("...first and foremost, sound...") Horace, *Epistulae* 1.1.108

"*nec sua non sanus scripta poeta legat!*" ("do not let an unsound poet read his writings!") Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 2.508

This trim book-roll, weighing in at only 476 lines, only seems slight. Its power and punch proceed from its abiding concern with appropriateness, including an emphasis on the embarrassment—provoked by reader responses ranging from snoring to annoyance to derisive laughter—that looms for writers who circulate unfit poems. The prospect of shame can be a mighty motivator of caution. Horace explicitly addresses the Pisos, two well-born young men seemingly caught up in the scribbling craze Horace has previously whinged and cringed about,

⁵⁸ This word can mean sound, sane, healthy, or sensible; I will translate it as "sound" for the sake of not being cumbersome but the range of meaning should be kept in mind, too.

and he might be getting a dig in at their prissy pose of entitlement at 379-384.⁵⁹ Ellen Oliensis has highlighted the social tensions behind Horace's "rhetoric of authority" in the *Ars*; Horace's poetic mastery yet comparatively low-born status clashes with the Pisos' poetic incompetence yet high-born status.⁶⁰ As a whole, the poem seems offered in a wryly instructional spirit, with discouragements and restrictions doing much of the didactic and rhetorical work.

Horace's advice on corpus care and correction fits within his larger emphasis on avoiding errors. Early on, he volunteers that most of "us" writers are deceived by "*specie recti*" (a semblance of the correct/appropriate): "working to be brief, / I become obscure; aiming for smoothness (*levia*), / some fall short in nerve and verve; one promising grandeur is swollen (*turget*); / another creeps across the ground, too cautious and afraid of a storm" (25-28). In sum, any "flight from a fault leads to an error" if done without art (30). Using a musical analogy, Horace acknowledges that sometimes the string does not yield the sound that a hand and heart intends, and he reckons that gracious readers will excuse a few offenses so long as errors are not so plentiful that they distract and detract from the rest of the poem (347-353). The poet who continually flubs either greatly offends or becomes a joke, his few good lines provoking laughter and surprise (357-8). Horace even reveals his own displeasure when he notices a place in Homer where the bard seems to have snoozed for a moment, but concedes that drowsiness sneaks into long works (358-360).⁶¹ Short poems have no such excuse.

As he does in other works, Horace tends to tilt the advantage toward Greek approaches to poetry so as to first injure and then energize his readers' national pride. Nascent poets should

⁵⁹ I paraphrase: People without the body or skill for military training or athletic hobbies have sense enough not to make public spectacles of themselves, but ignorance of and inability in *ars poetica* do not stop aristocratic Romans from "daring to form verses," thinking themselves all the while totally and utterly remote from error. Compare to *Epistulae* 2.1.109-117.

⁶⁰ See the final chapter of her book of that title, especially 198-9 and 211-5.

⁶¹ See Longinus §33 for a different take on the "oversights" of lofty poets.

roll out (*versate*) Greek exempla by night and by day (268-9), because “[t]o the Greeks the Muse gave *ingenium*,⁶² to the Greeks (the ability) to speak with well-rounded mouth (*ore rotundo*), / greedy for nothing except glory” (323-4). Romans, on the other hand, love to number-crunch and accumulate wealth, so “how can we hope to form poems / worthy to be coated with cedar oil and stored in smoothed out cypress?” (331-2), that is, to be treated as objects worthy of preservation.

But the difference between Greece and Rome is one of attitude, not aptitude. “Our poets have left nothing unattempted,” even roaming behind the paths trod by the Greeks, yet something else other than “*cura peculi*” (care for money, 330) holds them back from dominance: a lack of care for the corpus.

The strength and fame of Latium’s arms would not be more powerful / than its tongue, if only each and every one of its poets was not offended / by the labor of the file and delay (*limae labor et mora*). You, O blood of Pompilius,⁶³ condemn any poem that / many days and many blots (*litura*) have not restrained and / not corrected ten times to the pared fingernail (*praeseclum ad unguem*). (285-294)

Writing against the grain of more than just papyrus, Horace proposes a compositional ethics of the slow, deeming the “delay” of “many days” an integral part of the poetic art. In *Sermones* 1.4, Horace thanks the gods for making him of “rare and scanty speech” (18), able to hold back and issue words few and far between. Tied to this restraint is scraping and scrapping with the metaphorical file, leaving behind erasure holes (*litura*) of dissatisfaction. On those writers who, as Oliensis puts it, “will not condescend to labor over their creations, like the lowly artisan who

⁶² Roughly translated as “talent” or “an inborn capacity for excellence.” I will leave this word untranslated in the forthcoming Ovid chapter.

⁶³ This could mean the Pisos or all Romans.

sweats to give his statues the requisite finish,”⁶⁴ Horace attempts an attitude adjustment. What are we to make of the ten-times-trimmed fingernail?

Earlier (32-35), Horace had introduced a craftsman adept at forming fingernails (*unguis*) and imitating soft hair in bronze, but displeased with his final product because he could not put together (*ponere*) a whole body. “Now I myself, if I should care to compose (*componere*) something, / should no more want to be that way than to live with a nose bent out of shape, / but being admired for my black eyes and black hair” (35-7). To form a sound body should be a sculptor and a wordsmith’s first priority, only after which should each and every articulation be filed down, even a given corpus’ all ten fingernails. No detail is too small for editorial attentions. Horace uses the phrase “to the fingernail” (*ad unguem*) on only one other occasion in his oeuvre, to describe someone in Maecenas’ circle called Fonteius Capito as “*ad unguem / factus homo*” (*Sermones* 1.5.32-3). Armand J. D’Angour, in a full-length article dedicated to putting his finger on the meaning of the phrase, writes that “*ad unguem*” functions “as a metaphor that implies a high level of finish and a comprehensive perfection. In similar vein [sic], *ad unguem factus homo* depicts a wholly admirable individual in particulars and in toto: a gentleman to his fingertips.”⁶⁵ Capito displays “physical or intellectual refinement (or both),”⁶⁶ and Horace’s application of this index of cultivation to poetics functions similarly to point to an aesthetic attentiveness to the form and content of the whole corpus, right down to the fingernails.

But Horace does not permit us to clip the discussion of fingernails there, for they scratch their way back into the discussion again. Wrongly convinced that “miserable *ars*” and straight-laced soundmindedness would exclude them from the poetic mount of Helicon, “a good part (of

⁶⁴ Oliensis, *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority*, 209.

⁶⁵ Armand J. D’Angour, “*Ad Unguem*,” *The American Journal of Philology* 120.3 (Autumn 1999): 417-8.

⁶⁶ D’Angour, “*Ad Unguem*,” 413.

poets) do not care (*curat*) to cut their fingernails (*unguis*) / or their beards, seeking out deserted places, avoiding the baths” (295-298). As poets attempt to affect the look and smell of a genius far beyond the niceties of *ars*, basic hygienic measures fall out of favor; Agathon’s razors are certainly nowhere to be seen.

Horace has seen and smelled this problem before. In *Epistulae* 1.19, he cites the old adage that “no poems can please for long, or live, / that are written by water drinkers” (2-3). And he complains jokingly that ever since he publically proclaimed that only the forum—that is, oratory—is for sober people, “poets have not ceased / to compete in wine by night, and to stink of it by day” (10-11), as if sloshing dionysian drink will lead to pleasing poems with staying power. “What?” laughs Horace, “if someone, with a grim and wild look and bare feet / and a thinly woven toga, copied Cato, / would he thereby represent the virtue and habits of Cato?” (12-4). Roman poets seem to want to cut corners by mimicking external signals of poetic preeminence that are more proverbial—the poet out of his wits due to unmanageable talent or a great deal of wine—than actual. Horace also uses hair- and nail-cutting to make a personal poetic plea in the first poem of the *Epistulae*. In a moment of frustration, he vents that Maecenas cares more when Horace gets a shoddy haircut or cuts his nails oddly (*prave sectum unguem*) than when Horace’s “whole order of life” seems out of sorts (1.1.94-104), his unsound body causing more upset than his unsound mind.

Mess, muddle, and mediocrity will not do for the Pisos. Horace alerts them to the high expectations poets face, especially as compared to orators: “a legal consultant or middling (*mediocris*) prosecutor / may not boast the eloquent vigor / of Messalla, nor know as much of Cascellius Aulus, / yet still have value: neither men, nor gods, nor bookshops (*columnae*) /

permit poets to be mediocre (*mediocribus*)” (369-373).⁶⁷ If a poem falls short of the top, it might as well fall to the bottom (378). So that neophyte poets might prevent that sad sagging and sliding downward, Horace offers this advice:

if at some point you write something, let it fall into the judging ears (*iudicus auris*) of Maecus and of your father and of me, and, having put the skinny sheet (*membrana*) indoors, keep it shut up for nine years. That which you do not put out (*non edideris*) permits of erasure (*delere*, also “cutting out”); a voice sent out (*vox missa*) does not know how to return. (385-390)

I will return to collaborative editing in a moment (since Horace does, too) and focus first on the nine-year house arrest and comparison of released text to spoken voice. Horace previously named *mora* (delay) an essential supplement to working hard with the file, though he did not specify the duration of this critical distance. In his *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*, Jeffrey Walker tackles Horace’s recommendation of nine years downtime with speculative gusto and rhetorical questions: “Did Horace himself really wait ‘nine years’ before ‘publishing’ (that is, presenting in public) his poems? How could this have worked for his *Carmen Saeculare*, which was performed at the Secular Games of 17 B.C. by a chorus of boys and girls? Or what of poems like *Odes* 4.2, which celebrates the return of Augustus’ [sic] from Gaul in 16 B.C.? Waiting ‘nine years’ would have made such a poem more than a little *akairos*, untimely.”⁶⁸ But, as Walker notes, Horace is not divulging his own editing habits but rather working with young elites who as yet lack the fullness of *ars*. Moreover, Walker’s two examples of Horatian poetry are slanted: Augustus commissioned both items. When Augustus requests verses, a poet presumably asks for a due date. Holding back a poem gives its author opportunity to keep

⁶⁷ For a lengthy treatment of the perfect poet and the perfect orator, see Mary A. Grant and George Converse Fiske, “Cicero’s ‘Orator’ and Horace’s ‘Ars Poetica’,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 35 (1924): 1-74.

⁶⁸ Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*, 305, parenthesis sic.

altering it; Horace tellingly emphasizes erasure over other editorial options like altering or adding. He also signals the poem's material immaturity, as it has not yet advanced to the papyrus stage. In comparing the vagaries of released book-rolls with spoken words, Horace highlights the wandering ways of words set loose. Because words, written or spoken, are all but blind and directionless, poets do well to prepare for this one-way trip by seeking the critical judgments of trusted friends.

Punning on *emendas* (a form of *emendo*, "to emend," or *emo*, "to sell", 419), Horace warns against offering presents to whoever agrees to assess one's poems, as such an enticement will draw flatterers who will fawn over the poem in all manner of over-the-top and exclamatory ways. Horace encourages the Pisos to seek out his trusty critic Quintilius and describes what an editing session with him is like. After Quintilius points out what needs correction:

If you could not do better / after two or three frustrated attempts, his verdict would be to cut it out entirely (*delere*) / and to return the badly shaped verses to the lathe (*tornatos*).⁶⁹ / If you preferred to defend your defect rather than change it, / he would waste not one more word or bit of useless effort, / so that you could love yourself and yours alone and without rival. / A good and prudent man will condemn lifeless verses, / blame the harsh, a black mark smearing the disheveled (*incomptis*) with a sweep of the pen (*calamo*), cut away dizzying / ornament, force light onto what is too little clear, / notice ambiguous phrasings, will note what should be changed, / will become an Aristarchus.⁷⁰ (439-450)

This "good and prudent man" will not hold back for fear of offending his friend over a little thing, as little things can lead to serious problems, like being received with derision and malcontent (450-3). If the Pisos, and the many poets and readers throughout Rome, would absorb the tenets of Horace's *ars*, Latin literature could move from faking it to making it.

⁶⁹ This imagery is startlingly reminiscent of Aristophanes' depiction of Agathon's compositional-editorial methods in *Thesmophorizusae*.

⁷⁰ Aristarchus was a second century BCE Alexandrian critic of Homer.

3.4 CONCLUSION

According to the Romantic poet Shelley, “poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.” Horace prefers to leave the world to Augustus and to legislate the word instead, but he does hail their respective work as emendation with a civic orientation. A *censor* of uncorrected poems, Horace takes the most offense at insensitive glibness and affected escapes from the bathing and shaving of *ars*. His corrective tool of choice is the file, though he never represents himself using it within his poems. It is instead an object he brandishes as he makes pertinent points about (his) modern-day poetics. In the *Sermones* and *Epistulae*, he holds the *lima* high for Roman readers to see, hoping they will warm to it and come to deem the rough verses produced by past poetic greats like Lucilius as unbefitting the times. In the *Ars Poetica*, he wags it admonishingly before poets put off by the demands of editing and by the inherent imperfection its use would suggest exists in their poetic output. Throughout the three works on which I have focused (and even in the *Odes*), Horace shows a marked philosophical bent, even stressing that “*scribendi recte*” arises from “*sapere*” (being wise) and directing aspiring poets to seek out the “*Socraticae chartae*” (Socratic sheets) for instruction on wisdom (*Ars* 309). In accordance with this approach to poetics, the scrape of the file is not a quick superficial treatment that attracts readers who like shiny objects but rather a deliberate, diligent refinement of material not meant for everyone. Though Horace writes in an awkward and ill-defined political time, his repeated emphasis on the file does not hint at fear and trembling at the risk of falling out of line with the order of things. Instead, he links the less hesitant use of the file with the finer control of self-expression—long a rhetorical concern—and the greater glory of Rome. By forging this latter connection, Horace does not cave to but takes advantage of civic

circumstances (a change of guard, continued Roman expansion, a new library) to make a secure place for his book-rolls.

Like an old married couple, Maecenas and Horace die in the same year, while Augustus passes on 22 years later. In between the two events, Ovid finds himself on the wrong side of the legislator of the world and is booted to what Romans in his time considered to be its outskirts. It is to his flight and plight—negotiated poetically with both the *pumex* and the *lima*—that I turn next.

CHAPTER 4 – ROUGHING IT, REPEATEDLY: OVID’S EXILIC *EPEXERGASIA*

“*quid rude prodis opus?*” (“why show the rough work?”) *Ars Amatoria* 3.228¹

“*cur igitur, si me video delinquere, peccem, / et patiar scriptio crimen inesse, rogas?*”
 (“why, therefore, if I see my delinquency, do I go on blundering, and suffer the crime to stay in my writings, you ask?”) *Epistulae Ex Ponto* 3.9.13-4

A sliding variation on the wayward themes of deviation and violation marks the limits of poetic *licentia*²—flaw, defect, flub, blunder, slip-up, error, mistake, fault, offense, crime—and suggests possible danger for the loose poet. At *Sermones* 2.1.59, Horace rallied that even if his “too free”³ verses resulted in exile, he would write from there, but he never had occasion to prove that outlook. But, sixteen years after Horace’s death, Publius Ovidius Naso’s sudden expulsion from Rome to Tomis⁴ afforded him ample opportunity to reflect on the nature of poetic license and its loss. Born in Sulmo (now Sulmona, Italy) the year Cicero’s head and hand(s) were severed and displayed on the speaking rostrum in the forum by order of Marcus Antonius (43 BCE),⁵ Ovid was spared the grisly sight of dismembered eloquence. He was not,

¹ All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

² The Latin word *licentia* can mean (permissive) freedom or (excessive) lack of restraint, a definitional mix of two of its English cognates, license and licentiousness.

³ *Sermones* 1.4.103, “*liberius*”.

⁴ Now the resort town of Constantza, Romania.

⁵ Plutarch, *Life of Cicero*, §48-9 and Seneca the Elder, *Suasoriae* 6.17 (quoting from a no longer extant book-roll of Livy). See also Amy Richlin, “Cicero’s Head,” in *Construction of the Classical Body*, ed. James Porter, 190-211 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), and Shane Butler, *The Hand of Cicero* (New York: Routledge, 2002). Ovid and Cicero both owe their names to the noses of their ancestors. Plutarch reports that “Cicero”, from the Latin *cicer* (chickpea), derives from the resemblance of a family ancestor’s nose to that wholesome and clefted legume (Plutarch, §2). Ovid’s cognomen, Naso, is plainly nasal. For a playful take on Ovid’s nose, see David Malouf, *An Imaginary Life* (New York: Vintage, 1996), a novel about

however, ultimately spared a similarly wrenching end. By most accounts, Ovid came of age when the traditional forms and forums of public speech had been closed up or at least had lost their charge. Yet, his writings from exile contain teasing snapshots of ongoing public *eloquentia* in Rome.⁶ Of course, it is in Ovid's interests to depict a Rome where persuasion is not dead.

The concept of a rhetorical Ovid is by no means a new one. Seneca the Elder, a contemporary, highlighted Ovid's rhetorical education, tellingly emphasizing Ovid's inability to keep his *licentia* in check even as a student.⁷ Much more recently, Richard Lanham has enthusiastically embraced Ovid as a "*homo rhetoricus*", and George Kennedy has afforded him ample space in *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World*.⁸ Previously, classicists had classified Ovid's works as rhetorical, but the word seemed to make them "uncomfortable."⁹ As Philip Hardie put it, "[a] long-standing tendency among classicists to dismiss Ovid's verbal

Ovid's imaginative adventures while on the Black Sea: "I am essentially a social creature. Some poets, Vergil for example, have an ear, perfect in every way. I have a nose. And noses are political, even when all you are putting them into are the most private places. Perhaps most political just then. Noses get you into trouble. I could sniff out too well what everyone wants to hear, has begun to think, and *will* think too, once I have said it" (25). Other biographical similarities include their being from aristocratic, non-Roman families and both being ejected from Rome. Cicero spent only a year and a half in exile, but was not ordered far from Rome, was able to have visitors, and was recalled to Rome. For a comparison of their respective exilic writings, see Jo-Marie Claassen, *Displaced Persons: The Literature of Exile from Cicero to Boethius* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999).

⁶ *Facundia* (fluent speech) mentioned: *Tristia* 1.9, 3.5.29; *Epistulae Ex Ponto*: 1.3.11, 1.2, 1.9, 1.6, 1.7, 2.2, 2.5.69, 3.5. Venues vary from the courthouse, to the senate steps, to private audiences with Augustus (that Ovid hopes his friends are seeking out on his behalf).

⁷ Seneca the Elder's *Controversiae* 2.2.8-12 and 9.5.17; *licentia* at 2.2.12.

⁸ Richard Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); George Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 405-419.

⁹ To quote Nicolas P. Gross, "Rhetorical Wit and Amatory Persuasion in Ovid," *The Classical Journal* 74.4 (April-May 1979): 305-318. See also his book *Amatory Persuasion in Antiquity* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985), and P. Tuohy, "Eros and Eloquence: Modes of Amatory Persuasion in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*," in *Roman Eloquence*, ed. William Dominik, 163-174 (New York: Routledge, 1997).

pyrotechnics as so much empty ‘rhetoric’ has been overtaken by a rise in the theoretical and literary-critical stock of rhetoric.”¹⁰

Ovid’s own recounting of his rhetorical education deserves prompt scrutiny, though one should be mindful that it operates as part of his ongoing efforts during exile to characterize himself as a playful poet with neither the “*corpus*” nor the “*mens*” for onerous, laborious, ambitious public life (cf. *onus*, 36; *labori*, 37; *ambitionis*, 38; *Tristia* 4.10). Politics are not and have never been his game, he claims. In the final poem of the fourth book-roll of his *Tristia* (usually translated as “Sorrows”, but its adjectival form, “*tristis*”, can mean “sullen” or “harsh”¹¹), Ovid details his youth and young manhood, a process of growing into his role as the younger son of the current generation of a long-established noble family. Due to the care of their father, Ovid and his brother went to Rome at a tender age to gain the finest rhetorical education money and status could buy. From the start, his (exactly one year) older brother “tended toward *eloquentia*, born geared up for the wordy forum” (*ad eloquentium...tendebat ...fortia verbosi natus ad arma fori*, 17-18).¹² And Ovid, meanwhile? Even when he was just a boy (*iam puero*, 19), the Muse “dragged” him to do her bidding (*trahebat opus*, 21). Often, his father would sternly call poetry a “useless” pursuit, and remind his son that even Homer left behind “no

¹⁰ Philip Hardie, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, ed. Hardie (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6. Other recent treatments of the rhetorical Ovid include: Elaine Fantham, “Rhetoric and Ovid’s Poetry,” in *A Companion to Ovid*, ed. Peter Knox, 26-44 (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009); Ulrike Auhagen, “Rhetoric in Ovid,” in *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric*, ed. William Dominik and Jon Hall, 413-424 (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2010); Richard Tarrant, “Ovid and the Failure of Rhetoric,” in *Ethics and Rhetoric: Classical Essays for Donald Russell on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Innes, Hine, and Pelling, 63-74 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Alessandro Schiesaro, “Ovid and the professional discourses of scholarship, religion, rhetoric,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, ed. Hardie, 62-78.

¹¹ Ovid likely chose it for its depth. See, for instance, *Tristia* 2.133, when he calls Augustus’ words to him “*tristibus invectus verbis*”.

¹² In *Tristia* 3.2.9, Ovid describes himself as “*otia natus*”, born for leisurely activities. His brother, as we see here, was *negotia natus*, born for non-leisurely activities.

wealth” (21-2; discounting, of course, the opulence of Homer’s literary gifts).¹³ “Moved by his (father’s) words,” Ovid declares, he utterly foreswore Helicon and “tried to write words loose from measure. But spontaneous poetry would come in befitting meter, and whatever I tried to write was verse” (23-6).

Ovid and his brother had just attained the purple-bordered toga when the latter died, only twenty, taking a part (*coepi parte*) of Ovid with him. Alone, Ovid advanced along the *cursus honororum* only as far as triumvirs before opting not to enter the senate house, professing not to have been made out for public life (using the excuses cited in the previous paragraph). All the while the Muses were persuading him (*suadebant*, 39) to embrace the lifestyle he had always chosen and loved. He then describes the close-knit circle of poetic greats he both esteemed and joined, including Horace, and remarks upon his almost instant renown (*notaque non tarde*, 56). Until 8 CE, Ovid was writing and publishing regularly, widely, and without hassle: what happened? Because his rough ejection from Rome occasions the corpora whose care (or supposed lack thereof) I make my concern in this chapter, I will first survey what prompted the judgment against him and Ovid’s early attempts to overturn it.

According to Ovid, who provides the only surviving side of his case, Augustus banished him for “*duo crimina, carmen et error*” (two crimes, a poem and a mistake, *Tristia* 2.207). Much to the exquisite agony of centuries of readers, Ovid does not reveal the *error*, describing it only as one committed by his eyes and not his tongue, not willful, and not told to anyone else.¹⁴

¹³ Analogously, I imagine parents these days who tell their children who want to be artists that Van Gogh sold only two paintings during his lifetime, dying one-eared and penniless. Less seriously, I am also reminded of the Ogden Nash poem that “Poets aren’t very useful / Because they aren’t consumeful or very produceful.”

¹⁴ Eyes and accident: *Tristia* 2.103-108 (it seems he witnessed something unsavory and did not report it), 3.1.52, 3.549-50. Silence: *Tristia* 2.208, 3.5.47-8, 3.6.11.12, 4.10.99-100; *Epistulae Ex*

He blames the mistake on his stupidity and timidity, rather than audacity.¹⁵ The *carmen* in question is the romping *ménage a trios* that is the three-booked *Ars Amatoria*, which rolled around Rome for years before criminal proceedings were brought up against it.¹⁶ Issued well after Augustus' stringent social reforms—regarding marriage, child-production, and adultery¹⁷—the book-rolls purport to contain lessons on making love, an artful process dependent upon constant manipulation and grounded in rhetorical activity.¹⁸ These lessons on luring and securing desirable persons are taught by a “*praeceptor amoris*”, professor of love, or Professor Love, as we might say today. Book-roll one begins with the poetic *ego* (that is, the “I” within the poem) introducing itself as Professor Love (“*ego sum praeceptor Amoris*”, 1.17), and book-rolls two and three close with the Professor Love requesting reader-pupils credit Naso as their teacher (NASO MAGISTER ERAT, 2.744 and 3.812). In openly identifying Professor Love with himself, Ovid loses any protection the persona might have offered his person had the two been disambiguated.¹⁹

By peddling bold advice on a salacious series of sexual topics and even positions, Naso stuck his nose in Augustus' highly sensitive political business. But since when is writing naughty poems a crime? And why the delay between Augustus' reforms, Ovid's flaunting of them (if indeed that's what he does), and Augustus' choice to banish him? Ovid twice wonders

Ponto 2.3.87-8. Plea that his transgression be considered an error and not a wicked deed (*errorem...non scelus*): *Tristia* 4.10.90.

¹⁵ timidity: *Epistulae Ex Ponto* 2.3.88.

¹⁶ All three book-rolls were circulating in Rome before the turn of the century, putting an eight-year gap between their publication and their designation as a crime.

¹⁷ Both the *Lex Iulia de adulteris coercendis* and the *Lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* were issued in 18 BCE.

¹⁸ See, for instance, *Ars Amatoria* 1.459-62.

¹⁹ P. J. Davis, *Ovid and Augustus: A Political Reading of Ovid's Erotic Poems* (London: Duckworth, 2006) contains a full treatment of such issues. See also Luisi Aldo and Nicoletta F. Berrino's new collection called *Carmen et error: nel bimillenario dell'esilio di Ovidio* (Bari: Edipuglia, 2008).

about the lag time, pointing out that he had come before Augustus several times after publishing (*edideram*) the sinful writings (*scripto peccavimus*, 539-532), “and, I remember, you approved of my life and my ways” (89-92). “A not new fault,” Ovid sorrowfully observes, “is made to suffer a new punishment” (*supplicium patitur non nova culpa novum*, 540). Augustus is, at best, inconsistent.

Ovid divulges—and these details would have been falsifiable for at least some readers—that he was condemned by Augustus’s own harsh words (*tristibus verbis*, *Tristia* 2.133), rather than through a senatorial decree or special court (2.131-4). This procedural detail puts the very legality of Ovid’s expulsion into question. Patricia J. Johnson claims that “the decline of freedom afforded to poets by the emperor parallel[s] the well-documented decline in the republican arts of oratory and rhetoric”,²⁰ but Ovid is the only hard evidence of a crackdown on poets. Post-republic poets certainly had to be careful; the excuses they often offer for not writing on bigger themes (the famous *recusatio*) might also be recognitions of the risk of somehow blundering in their account of major political events or players. Even so, Ovid stands alone. His mysterious *error*, therefore, must have offered Augustus’ cause to put Ovid and his earlier book-rolls under the microscope for close scrutiny, and an advisor of Augustus seems to have taken on this responsibility. “Ah! How uncivilized (*fera*) and too cruel the enemy who read my playthings (*delicias meas*) to you,” picking out only the bad parts (77-8), Ovid wails.²¹ As Peter Green points out, “a sexual scandal could—can—always be relied upon to distract public

²⁰ Patricia J. Johnson, *Ovid Before Exile: Art and Punishment in the Metamorphoses* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 5.

²¹ In Latin, a “reading” is always a “choosing”, as *lego* can mean either.

attention away from more serious political and economic problems.”²² And thus we know more of the poetic crime than the other (political?) one.

Ovid decries learning about his relegation when he was not present in Rome and therefore unable to make his case with speed and urgency (*Epistulae Ex Ponto* 2.3.83-90); ironically enough, he was visiting a friend on the island now called Elba, the site of Napoleon’s exile. His self-defensive plea in the second book-roll of his *Tristia* to “trust me, my ways differ from my poems – / my life is modest, my Muse a joker – / and the better part of my work is a fabrication or fiction; / it’s more permissive than its composer. / Nor is a book-roll an index of character, but rather respectable pleasure; it offers many things apt to stroke the ears” is too little, too late (2.353-358).²³ Just as his writings from exile explore the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of the vocabulary of poetic mistakes with which I opened this chapter, they also engage the legalistic side of rhetorical redress.²⁴ Given Ovid’s disinclination for arguing about

²² Peter Green, *The Poems of Exile: Tristia and The Black Sea Letters* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), xxiv.

²³ “*crede mihi, distant mores a carmine nostri – / vita verecundia est, Musa iocasa me – / magnaue pars mendax operum est et ficta meorum: / plus sibi permisit compositore suo. / nec liber indicum est animi, sed honesta voluptas; / plurima mulcendis auribus apta feret.*” This excuse smacks of Catullus’ in c. 16.5-11, treated in chapter 2, and if Augustus recognizes this allusion, he will know also of what Catullus—and thus, in a sense, Ovid, too—threatens to do to those who misread him. Ovid also calls his Muse “*lascivia*” (*Tristia* 2.313) and again “*iocata*” (3.2.6: “My Muse is more iocose than my life”; 5.1.20).

²⁴ See Matthew McGowan, *Ovid in Exile: Power and Poetic Redress in the Tristia and Epistulae Ex Ponto* (Boston: Brill, 2009), a book on the “redress of poetry” in Ovid’s relegation writings, borrowing the phrase from Seamus Heaney, especially 41ff on the abundant legal language in Ovid: “Roman literature is saturated to the core with terms of the law, and many words in the Latin language often carry a legal significance outside any immediate legal context” (41). In addition to the items I present above, McGowan does not mention the following: a *libellus* was the medium of slim verse as well as the format for legal petitions, as I mentioned in regard to Catullus’ little book-roll (not incidentally, the Greek word for a written object—*graphê*—also meant a formal legal indictment); a “plea” can be either a juridical declaration of fault status in answer to a charge or a persuasive appeal, and; “appeal” itself denotes either a formal application for the reconsideration of a judgment or a mode of begging desperation or alluring attraction. Ovid’s use of that medium and those modes of speech relies on their essential ambiguity—their

and orating on real legal and political matters, his “misfortune,” as George Kennedy notes somberly, “was that he was given a case to plead”: his own.²⁵ Ovid warns his first little book-roll (*parve liber*, 1) sent from Tomis to Rome not to defend itself if attacked by “biting words”, since his *ca(u)se* is not good for much of a legal defense (*Tristia* 1.1.25-6). He cannot resist, though, later shaming a Roman rascal who uses his “eloquent mouth” (*ora disert*a, *Tristia* 3.11.20) to defame him: “against an easy *ca(u)se* anyone can be eloquent, / and the smallest amount of strength suffices to smash what is already shattered.” Ovid also calls upon the *facundia* (fluent speech) of his elite friends, not complimenting it for its own sake but attempting to put it into service as his *advocati*.²⁶ If they cannot get him recalled to Rome, could they at least get him moved to a more hospitable relegation location? Further, that Ovid calls the “shabby” little book-rolls he sends to Rome to make his case his “children” might be the textual equivalent of the courtroom commonplace of bringing one’s bedraggled kids before the jury to tug on their heartstrings. The most significant juncture of the poetic and legalistic comes in the word *iudex*, as an evaluator of a legal case and a critic of poetry are both called a “judge”.²⁷ Near the end of *Tristia*, Ovid all but rests his case when he declares that “Thalia”²⁸ has been conquered and enclosed by the law” (*Tristia* 5.9.31). The choked constriction of his poetic *licentia* is assured. Right?

Those legalistic types of what Jo-Marie Claassen calls “exilic appeal”²⁹ make up one limb of the rhetorical posture Ovid assumes to advance his *ca(u)se*. Added to them is

slipping and sliding—to invest every word of his relegation writings with maximum reader impact.

²⁵ Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World*, 405.

²⁶ *Tristia* 1.9.57ff is a fine representative example. See also *Epistulae ex Ponto* 1.2.67ff.

²⁷ That doubling aspect is particularly pronounced in *Tristia* 1.1.37, 2.80, and 2.98.

²⁸ Thalia is the Muse of comic and light verse.

²⁹ See Claassen’s *Displaced Persons*, chapter 4.

description after description of barren Tomis and its shaggy, minimally communicative, and bellicose inhabitants. Monotonous much? The readers of Ovid's exilic output seem to think so.³⁰ My focus in this chapter is on what joins together those recurring strains: the iterations of attention Ovid affords to the correction of his writings. Because of his distance from Rome, his self-defense is thoroughly textual, but more than that its very textuality plays a large role, as Ovid disavows the smoothness of textual and rhetorical *cultus* in an effort to capture goodwill. Bookishness abounds; Ovid even analogizes that sorrow gnaws his heart like bookworms do scrolls (*Epistulae Ex Ponto* 1.1.72-4). To an extent unmatched by any previous writer, Ovid displays his editorial body, continually importing to readers' minds the image of a man trying to correct his mistakes. Asomatic poetry would not serve Ovid's desperate need to keep his body present *in absentia*, but he does express worry that readers will mistake his depictions of his increasingly sensitive and finicky body for mere "daintiness" (*delicias*, *Epistulae Ex Ponto* 1.10.16). Nevertheless, in that same poem he goes on to describe his corpus as slender (*gracili corpore*, 21) and his limbs piteously shriveled for lack of vigor and paler than new wax (*parvus in exiles sucus mihi pervenit artus, / membraque sunt cera pallidiora nova*, 27-8), which, of course, is written upon. Despite his "sad" state, Ovid doubles and puns with the bodily vocabulary of Roman rhetorical theory: his exilic corpus—his text, himself—is *exilis* (slight, thin, shriveled).

For the most part, scholars nowadays seem alert to what Stephen Harrison has called Ovid's "self-conscious rhetoric of poetic decline"³¹ but I give full presence to its editorial side.

³⁰ A charge Ovid addresses at *Epistulae Ex Ponto* 3.7, 3.9, and 4.15.

³¹ Stephen Harrison, "Ovid and genre: evolutions of an elegist," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, ed. Hardie, 85.

First, again and again in both *Tristia* and *Epistulae Ex Ponto*,³² Ovid begs the reader's pardon for the roughness of his verses. Whereas in the temporally prior *Tristia* he frames the matter largely as one of unsuitability (smooth verses would not befit his circumstances), in the later *Epistulae Ex Ponto* he uses the frame of inability (he is too exhausted and depleted to edit). The progression—that seems the wrong word—of this edit-based repetition has a marked, Beckett-like “I can't go on, I'll go on”³³ trudge about it, but all these protestations underhandedly behave as artful assertions of artlessness.

Second, throughout the five book-rolls of the *Tristia*, Ovid performs explicit editorial work not only on them but also on the *Metamorphoses*, attempting to transform that text and critical judgments about it from afar.³⁴ Though Ovid reports that he was working on the *Fasti* as well as the *Metamorphoses* when he learned of his banishment, he dwells, I argue, on the incomplete state of a text all about changes because it offers him more personally relevant rhetorical options given the change in “*mea tempora*” (my times, my temples; I explain this overlap below).

Third, the four book-rolls of the *Epistulae Ex Ponto* feature a recurring lament for the lost sociality of poetic creation, correction, and reception. In the *Tristia*, too, Ovid complains that he lacks a comprehending, appreciating audience to whom he can air his works in progress. The goad of the ear—both the judging ear (as Horace called it) of friendly critics and the eager ear of

³² I do not treat his other exilic work, *Ibis*.

³³ Samuel Beckett, “Waiting for Godot,” in *Samuel Beckett: The Grove Centenary Edition*. Vol. 3, ed. Paul Auster (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 1-87.

³⁴ As has been acknowledged by Stephen Hinds, “Booking the Return Trip: Ovid and *Tristia* 1,” in *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies: Ovid*, ed. Knox, 415-440, and Joseph Farrell, “The Ovidian Corpus: Poetic Body and Poetic Text,” in *Ovidian Transformations*, ed. by Hardie, Barchiesi, and Hinds (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society Supplement 23, 1999), 127-141.

a finished poem's readers—is gone. Ovid emphasizes his sad singularity in both exilic collections, but only in the *Epistulae* does he call out to his previous social circle by name. He slyly intimates that the blame for the offending verses is not his alone: he gave people, specified people, what they wanted to hear. But rather than to dwell on their partial responsibility, he tries to persuade his faraway friends to look out for him in any way they can. I conclude on a high note by showing that the strain of repetition Ovid interweaves with this editorial one is his frequent boast of wide, deep, and abiding authorial influence. Being recalled in his own time was not his only rhetorical aspiration.

Exilic Epexergasia

It is not because it rolls off the tongue that I have opted to call Ovid's exposed editorial efforts exilic *epexergasia*. The word—like the facet of Ovid's poetics to which it refers—has layers to it, heft, repetition, both in its construction (ep, ex, er) and in its history; yes, it has credentials as a bona fide rhetorical term. In chapter 1, I included *exergasia*—bringing a work to completion, perfecting it—as one of Isocrates' philoponic rhetorical terms. *Ep-exergasia* is literally a working through and then some, almost in the sense of trying anything. As far as I can tell, Quintilian is the first to give *epexergasia* an official place in rhetoric's extensive taxonomy, in the section of his *Institutio Oratoria* on *schēmata* and tropes (Book 8). After calling *exergasia* “a finishing, as it were, of the work of a proposition,” he calls *epexergasia* “a repeat” of the previous term plus “an accumulation out of abundance” (*cumulus ex abundanti*, 8.88-9). *Epexergasia* has an inexhaustible quality. Though for Isocrates and Alcidamas, *exergasia* refers to the polished precision made possible by excessive textuality, in later rhetorical theory,

exergasia comes to refer to “repeating the same thought in many figures”³⁵ and *epexergasia* to “a proposition...amplified by the superabundant accumulation of examples, illustrations, or proofs.”³⁶ The term straddles ancient Greek and Roman rhetorical culture, showing its development from an overall quality of discourse (high finish) to a localized feature of discourse, and demonstrating the palimpsestuous nature of rhetoric’s vocabulary.

Epexergasia suits Ovid doubly well, since its Greek origins tie it to editing and its Roman (and later) orientation point toward the rigors of rhetorical argumentation. Ovid uses editing as an epexergasic trope in his writings from exile, turning it this way and that so that the harsh (*tristis*) circumstances of the composition of his weary words elicit for them a sympathetic reading. Though the repetition might wear on the nerves of readers, it might also wear down their resistance. But there is another aspect, too. What gives editing rhetorical status is that it pertains to a writer’s respect for his readers; that Ovid claims to notice errors and yet not to correct them is a confrontational stance, even if, especially if, he has thoroughly edited his verses. “Why should I clean myself up for *you*?”, his polished poems demand. “Make yourself relevant to me!”

My re-re-introduction of *epexergasia* into rhetorical analytics has several implications. For one, I mean it to deepen our understanding of what Luigi Galasso calls Ovid’s “rhetoric of repetitiveness”³⁷ in the exilic works. Whereas scholars used to, again and again, attribute Ovid’s repetitiveness to his waning poetic energies, a new wave of scholars has overwhelmed that view,

³⁵ Richard Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, 2nd Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 74. It is well worth noting, too, that *exergasia* and *expolitio*, a programmatic word for Catullus’ abrasive poetics, become interchangeable at some point, both referring to the thorough working-out of a proposition.

³⁶ James De Mille, *The Elements of Rhetoric* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers: 1882), 158-9.

³⁷ Luigi Galasso, “*Epistulae Ex Ponto*,” in *Blackwell Companion to Ovid*, ed. Knox, 205.

arguing that there is rhetorical intent and intensive poetic control behind Ovid's reiterations.³⁸ This chapter adds to that wave.

It also contributes to the further historicizing of what Wayne Anderson and William Fusfield have called the "reiterative rhetoric" of transcendental and romantic writers in the nineteenth century.³⁹ Fusfield has theorized that reiterative rhetoric works: to "firm up" those already in agreement with a proposition and "wear down" those who are resistant; to induce readers to become participants in the on-going argumentation and thereby invest themselves in its outcome, and; to encourage a kind of intimacy between writer and reader that the distancing formalities of demonstrative proofs render untenable.⁴⁰ "We are continually aware of *who* we are reading," Fusfield emphasizes of reiterative writers.⁴¹ Ovid's writings from exile furnish compelling evidence that reiterative rhetoric is itself a recurring approach to stealing into the hearts and minds of readers, especially when the matter is a sensitive one.

Last, as I showed above, *epexergasia* describes a mode of rhetorically dwelling on a single position or multiple ones. As such, my addition of "exilic" to *epexergasia* entails a consideration of the converse of the happy, heavily Heideggerian "living in language" notion of rhetorical dwelling proposed by Michael Hyde.⁴² Rhetorical dwelling can also refer to a

³⁸ Besides Galasso, see Gareth Williams, *Banished Voices: Readings in Ovid's Exile Poetry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), especially the early chapters and the section on "Ovid's unpolished Muse") and Williams, "Ovid's Exile Poetry: Worlds Apart," in *Brill's Companion to Ovid*, 337-381.

³⁹ Wayne Anderson, "'Perpetual Affirmations, Unexplained': The Rhetoric of Reiteration in Coleridge, Carlyle, and Emerson," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71 (1985): 37-51; William Fusfield, "'To Want to Prove it ... is ... Really Superfluous': Friedrich Schlegel's Reiterative Repudiation of Demonstrative Rhetoric in the Athenäum Fragment #82," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83.2 (1997): 133-151.

⁴⁰ Fusfield, "'To Want to Prove It...'", 143-5.

⁴¹ Fusfield, "'To Want to Prove It...'", 143.

⁴² Michael Hyde, "Rhetorically, We Dwell," in *The Ethos of Rhetoric*, ed. Hyde (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), xiii, which is based on his original 1983 article.

repetitive inhabiting of a position destructive to cultivation, even to a kind of dying in language.

In an article on intellectual exiles, Edward Said exhibits the exile's fraught relationship to language by presenting two fragments from Theodor Adorno, a post-modern *exul*, as evidence.⁴³

Within the same work, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, Adorno both reckons that "[f]or a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live" (fragment 18) and insists that:

The demand that one harden oneself against self-pity implies the technical necessity to counter any slackening of intellectual tension with the utmost alertness, and to eliminate anything that has begun to encrust the work or to drift along idly, which may at an earlier stage have served, as gossip, to generate the warm atmosphere conducive to growth, but is now left behind, flat and stale. In the end, the writer is not allowed to live in his writing. (fragment 51)

A writer in exile should not rhetorically dwell on his piteous position—that is, impart it to paper and experience textually its limp hopelessness—in a way that endangers the quality of his writing. That qualifier is key. I recognize in this second Adorno fragment Ovid's laments for his co-editing friends and the improvement of his work through the gossipy, warm exchange of ideas. I hear Ovid's recurring apologies and explanations for his book-rolls' sad lack of editing. Yet, Ovid's exilic *epexergasia* does not indicate a "slackening" of his formerly taut poetics, but rather the skilled working through of his relegation in writing. All writing is difficult—Ovid describes his early work as the product "of care and vigilant labor" (*curae vigilatorumque laborum*, *Tristia* 2.11, 1.1.108)—and Ovid shows how the exilic page thickens its resistance, especially for one exiled for his writings. He repeatedly dramatizes the difficulties faced by his *exilis* corpus, amplifying the tensions between the techniques of living in and the temptations of dying in language.

⁴³ Said, "Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals," *Grand Street* 47 (Autumn 1993): 120-1.

4.1 A SAD MIND IN A SAD BODY?

“We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry.” W. B. Yeats, "*Anima Hominis*"

In the *Tristia*, Ovid continues to work on his *Metamorphoses*; in the *Epistulae Ex Ponto*, he continues to work on his friends at home. Underlying both forms of exilic *epexergasia* are Ovid's explanations for why he does not perform textual corpus care, most often attributing its lack to suitability in the *Tristia* (that is, it suits his harsh situation) and to inability in the *Epistulae*, though of course suitability to circumstance remains an unfortunate consideration in the second corpus. Centered in those frames sits his poetic body, looking by turns deteriorating and defiant.

Tristia begins with Ovid talking to his little book-roll and preparing it for its journey to Rome. Unlike Catullus (1.1) and Horace (*Epistulae* 1.20), Ovid apparently denies his creature the treatments and trappings of textual *cultus* (*Tristia* 1.1.1-14). To sashay into town looking smooth would seem shameless and impenitent, so the little book-roll instead walks the long road without a berry-dyed cover page, a coat of papyrus-preserving cedar oil, and sturdy white horns (*candida cornua*): it's utterly defenseless. Nor will its dark brows (*frontes*) have been polished with brittle pumice (*fragili...poliantur pumice*), meaning the book-roll's fibrous hair (*hirsutus, comis*) will hang in its eyes like the vagabond it is. A final indignity: its whole body will be splotched with "*litura*", blots.⁴⁴ Though he has denied his little book-roll all his former textual traits and identifiers, Ovid informs it that everyone will know it from its "*color*": "you want to

⁴⁴ Horace insists on an editorial stage of *litura* at *Ars Poetica* 293. As I show below, Ovid used to make *litura* at the suggestion of Atticus' friendly file (*Epistulae* 2.4.18). See Hinds "Booking the Return Trip" and Gareth Williams, "Representations of the Book-Roll in Latin Poetry: Ovid, *Tr.* 1, 1, 3-14 and Related Texts," *Mnemosyne* 45.2 (1992): 187-189, for Ovid's use of this word in his *Heroides* (letters from literary heroine to their deadbeat lovers). Disappointingly, neither Hinds nor Williams play up the tear (eye drip)/tear (rip) homonym in English.

dissemble, but you're obviously mine" (61-2). In ancient Roman rhetorical training, to apply *color* to a topic is to tint it with perspective, and Ovid's somber point of view, darkening every poem, points to his authorship. Just as his book-roll lacks the purple tinge of berry juice and the golden hue of cedar oil, so has his style shed all its vibrancy. Or so Ovid claims. The *color* could just as well refer to the insuppressible and distinctly Ovidian poetic abilities that enable his dissembling protestations, which any attentive reader will recognize.

As it trudges through Rome in search of a guide, Ovid's third exilic book-roll voices its own concerns (3.1.1-20). "Inspect me," it invites, "and you'll see nothing here except *triste*", advertising upfront that its contents are sad/harsh and part of Ovid's exilic collection rather than the forbidden *Ars*. Appropriate to its times (*temporibus conveniente*), it is neither golden from cedar oil nor smooth from pumice (*pumice levis*), blushing (*erubui*, that is, turning red—yet more *color*) at the mere thought of being more chic (*cultior*) than its creator.⁴⁵ Like its sibling *Tristia* 1, *Tristia* 3 bears a sad suffusion of blots (*suffusas...lituras*), but more shocking still is promised evidence of impure Latin, a result of the invasive "*barbara terra*" where it was written.

Before moving to how Ovid uses the *topos* (place) as a *topos*, the book-roll's "hair" could use more detangling. Ovid has already described his personified little book-roll as "hairy", when two poems over he calls his cheeks "hairy" (*hirsutus* at *Tristia* 1.1.12, *hirta* at 1.3.90): their bodies display the overgrowth of mourning, a sanctioned type of scruffiness, readers are meant to deduce. His is not the affective beard of the unkempt poetic madman so hateful to Horace in the *Ars Poetica*. Referring to Ovid's designation of the verses of the 3rd - 2nd century BCE Roman poet Ennius as "*hirsutius*" (more hairy, 2.259), Gareth Williams points out that *hirsutus* "also

⁴⁵ Near the end of this poem, the book-roll's letters begin to tremble and it becomes pale as wax (yet another *color*) as it imagines the prospect of facing Augustus.

carries the literary connotation of stylistic coarseness”.⁴⁶ Ovid’s verses, he would have readers believe, are also untouched by the razor, an editorial tool dear to the overly refined Agathon whom we met in chapter 1. The (cultivated) shabbiness of his corpora accords with their *tristis* situation: exile to a barbarian land (“*digna sui domini tempore, digna loco*”, *Tristia* 5.12.36). And of all the off-putting characteristics of the native people of Tomis, Ovid seems most off-put by the untrimmed manginess of their abundant locks (*hirsutos* at *Epistulae* 1.5.76, *hirsutis* at 3.5.6). A representative remark: “their mouths are concealed uncouthly by their long hair” (*oraeque sunt longis horrida texta comis*, *Tristia* 5.7.50; a chiasmus), meaning the exit-way of speech—our most civilizing possession—is shaggily blocked.

Braided together by this hair strand of corpus care are Ovid’s book-rolls, himself, his verses, and the native people. Furthermore, when viewed from the perspective of the famous theatre critic Kenneth Tynan, the polarity of hairy versus smooth takes on an additional coat of meaning. In an article about Tom Stoppard written for *The New Yorker* in 1977, Tynan divided contemporary poets into two camps: “the hairy” and “the smooth”, the former “heated, embattled, socially committed” and the latter “cool, apolitical stylists”.⁴⁷ Though Ovid was never utterly smooth in that sense, his writings from exile bear serious hair, the stubble and shag of a poet with an overt agenda to get himself called back to Rome.

As *Tristia* rolls on, Ovid dwells on the concinnity between the content and circumstances of his writing. “If any faults (*vitiosa*, vices) should show up, and they will, in my *libelli*, / take their times for an excuse, reader. / I am an *exul*, it is my consolation, not fame, that I seek... “ (4.1.1-3). Ovid expresses gratitude that the Muse did not abandon him to a fate for which it

⁴⁶ “Representations”, 186. Horace uses it that way, too, in *Epistulae* 1.3.

⁴⁷ Kenneth Tynan, “Profiles: Withdrawing with Style from the Chaos.” *The New Yorker* December 18, 1977: 42.

bears joint responsibility (*cum mecum iuncti criminis acta rea est*, 23), as writing sends him into a Bacchantic frenzy (41) during which he forgets his present and pressing ca(u)se (39-40). As soon as the flow of writing ceases, though, the unscrubbed verses call out for editorial attention, once more snapping Ovid back to full awareness of his sad state. “This laboring care (*cura*) is for who now? / Will the Sauromatae and Getae read my writings?” he asks snarkily (92-3), the implication being that the natives cannot even read Latin and, besides, shabby things suit their aesthetic. But, of course, Ovid asks this question of his Roman readers, willing them to answer resoundingly with a “for us!” that travels across the great distance. Though even the most unabashed reader adoration (unlikely, given his taint) would reach him in a much-reduced affective form, even thinking he can possibly secure it in the first place makes editing seem less ridiculously vainglorious.

Toward the end of the *Tristia*, Ovid claims to have no doubt that there will be not a few “barbarisms” in his little book-rolls, “but not the man but the place (*loci*) is culpable” (5.7.59-60). Using alibi language, he acknowledged early on that “as you carry out my instructions, book-roll, you will likely be blamed (*culpabere*) / for being beneath the high praise of my *ingenium*. / But it is the duty of a judge to seek out both the issue and the circumstances (*tempora*) of the issue. / If they ask about the time (*tempore*), you will be safe (*tutus*)” (1.1.35-9). The time and place of its composition lets it off the hook, assuring its release and further circulation. “Any fair judge,” though, “will marvel” at their very creation, “and read the writings—such that they are—with goodwill” (45-6). In 3.14, to which I return below, Ovid uses nearly the same formulation in his proposed preface to his collection: “Whoever reads these items—if anyone does—consider even before that / the time (*tempora*) and place (*loco*) in which they were composed. One will be fair to writings he knows to be / from the *tempus* of (an) exile

and a barbarian place: / and amidst so many adversities, he will be amazed that any poem at all / could stand to be produced by my sad hand” (27-32). He ends the poem by asking again that readers “deem his little book-roll worthy of goodwill / and pardoned by the condition of his fate” (52). Mitigating circumstances, he pleads, excuse any poetic crimes in his exilic works.

In *Tristia* 1.1 and 3.1, Ovid vividly presents his exilic writings as rough drafts, and he carries the spirit of these depictions throughout the work. Is he trying to elicit sympathy by describing them as grubby wanderers? I have argued instead that Ovid deploys those raggedy representations to showcase his acute rhetorical sensitivity to his situation, that is, both to his sad legal status as *relegatus* and to his harsh location (“as my *status* is pitiful (*flebilis*), so is my poem pitiful (*flebile*)”, *Tristia* 5.1.5). This publicized rhetorical sensitivity doubles as rhetorical slyness. His little book-rolls claim not to want to draw attention to themselves, but of course they do; overtures to appropriateness imply an assumed audience. That Ovid builds into his writings lots of room for improvement means their contents are not yet finished, that *he* is not yet finished. Just like that of the *Metamorphoses*, which I handle in a moment, their incompleteness models the on-going nature of his rhetorical redress.

But as he comes to the horrible realization that his pleas fall on deaf ears, Ovid’s attitude toward editing undergoes a change in frame. We see it first in the final book-roll of *Tristia*, as inability creeps in with unsuitability: “My *ingenium* has been ground down⁴⁸ by the long suffering of bad things, / and no part of my old vigor remains. / If ever, as now, having taken up a wax tablet, / I want to force words into feet, / I write no poems, or only the kind you currently see, / worthy of his master’s times (*tempore*), worthy of his place (*loco*)” (5.12.31-36). Since the early days of his exile, the “*materia*” of his ca(u)se has seemed too heavy for him to bear in light

⁴⁸ See also *Epistulae* 2.7 as worn down as the Via Apia (Rome’s main and oldest thoroughfare), yet Ovid sings a slightly different tune at *Epistulae* 4.10.4-8.

verse (*Tristia* 1.5.56), but now we see him crumpling, especially under the value-adding weight of editing. As every passing day brings Ovid nearer to dying far from home, he professes to wonder why he should keep his Nose to the grindstone. In few places in the *Epistulae* are his struggles more telling than in 1.5. Ovid claims that *otium*, that condition for which he was born, “has corrupted his corpus” (5): he and his verses cannot stay in shape when they are stuck, as they are, “*inerte situ*” (sluggishly in place, 8). A “forced, unwilling hand” grips the writing tools, even though:

it does not at all please my mind to bother with such cares (*curas*), / nor does the Muse come when called to the rough/hard (*duros*) Getae. / Yet, as you can see, I struggle with drawing out verse: / but it can be no softer than my fate. / When I read it over (*relego*), I am ashamed to have written it, / because I see many things / that even I, who made it, would erase (*lini*) with worthy judgment (*iudice digna*). / But, however, I do not emend (*emendo*). This labor is greater than the one to write (*scribere*), / and my exhausted mind cannot bear to suffer anything rough/hard (*durum*). / Am I, really, to start using the file more bitingly (*lima mordacius*), / and submit to the voice of judgment (*iudicium vocem*) every single word? (10-20).

The poem makes its own sad case, exhibiting itself as evidence of Ovid’s decline (*cernis*, 5; *cerno*, 15). Writing is tough enough on his system, but erasure and emendation too much for his worn-down mind to endure. (Notice that the native people and editing share the adjective *durus*.) He scoffs at the notion that he should *more* deeply sink his file’s teeth into his weak little words and call out each word by name to evaluate it, but this comparative adverb and hyperbole suggest the performance of editorial work of some kind. Why should he bear down? The promise of fruit is “the most justifiable cause for labors,” but “to this time (*tempus*), no work (*opus*) of mine, and it pleases you to repeat (*repetas*) them, / has yielded profit—and if only none had hurt me! Why, then, do I write, you wonder? And I wonder myself, / and along with you I often seek out what it is I’m aiming for” (25-30). Is he that old cliché, the insane poet (*sanos negat esse poetas*, 31), with rhyme but without reason? What *is* his aim? The overpowering forces of habit and familiarity pull him into his poetic process, just as a wounded gladiator

rejects fighting only to find himself back in the sands again (37-8).⁴⁹ Ovid's poeticizing has a palliative effect, as Seneca the Younger's Stoic philosophy would be consolatory for him during his exile in a few years time. This easing, Ovid claims, is precisely his poeticizing aim ("nothing is more useful / than these arts, which have no use," 53-4, lines that sum up the philosophical defense of liberal arts education still today). As he explained in *Tristia* 4.1, writing gives him moments of precious oblivion. But, again, whereas composition comes easily, any intensive labor seems causeless: "why should I polish (*poliam*) my poems with fussy care (*sollicita cura*)? / Should I fear that the Getan people will not approve?" (61-3). A little labor suffices to make him the best poet in the whole uncivilized region, and though such a "theatre" ought to be enough for his *infelix Musa*, Ovid wonders how he might—if he can—stretch himself to Rome and prove reports of his death premature (85-6). As his work rolls along the road to Rome, it might find favor with pockets of readers, but "that fact certainly yields its author nothing whatsoever" (78): who cares to be praised by anyone but Romans? Yet, will his "*scriptis mediocribus*" (83) stand up to the scrutiny of the polished?

Epistula 3.9 begins with an upfront recognition of Roman reader disgruntlement with his repetitions, and Ovid expresses relief that readers seem to have missed his many other blunders (*vitium*, 5, and *peccat*, 6). Though each "*auctor opus laudat*" (author praises his own work), Ovid sees all the rough spots in his writings; "why, therefore, if I see my delinquency, do I go on blundering, and suffer the crime to stay in my writings, you ask?" (13-4). Everyone can sense a malady, but not everyone possesses the "art" of healing. Yet, Ovid quickly dispenses with this platitudinous medical analogy—"why should I hesitate to tell you the truth?" (19)—and tattles on himself:

⁴⁹ This analogy resembles, of course, Horace's in the first poem of his *Epistulae*.

often, when wanting to change (*mutare*) some word, I just leave it, / as my strength cannot stand up to my judgment. Often (...) it irks me / to correct (*corrigere*, to smooth out) and endure the onus of long labor. / The very labor of writing relieves and lessons the laboriousness, / and the growing (*crescens*⁵⁰) work builds steam in my chest. / And as to correct (*corrigere*) is as much less arduous / as great Homer was greater than Aristarchus, / so it wears down the mind with the slow chill of cares (*curarum*), / as a racer restrains an enthusiastic horse with the reins.⁵¹ / (...) “And I seem to myself scarcely sane, I who makes poems, / and cares (*curem*) to correct (*corrigere*) them among the feral Getae. (17-26, 31-2)

Inability again fuses with suitability. Ovid stresses that his unvarying circumstances motivate his lack of variety (*unus sensus*), and just as, when cheerful, he wrote cheerfully, now that he is sorrowful he writes sorrowfully: “each time (*tempus*) has a type of work (*operi*) appropriate to it (*conveniens*)” (34-6).⁵² Repetitive he might be, but he does not always write to the same person. Learned readers (*docti*, 45) might grow weary of reading the same petitions again and again, but Ovid’s “Muse is a true index of my no few bad experiences, / and has all the weight of an incorruptible witness (*testis*)” (49-50). Besides, Ovid concludes, he has directed his care not toward producing a book for fame’s sake but toward selecting (*electum*, 54) letters that most displayed his dutiful pose toward others. Having collected them, he joined them together “*sine ordine*” (without order, 53).⁵³ Here is yet another editorial explanation—an intervention, really, like the others—that accounts for some facet of his texts Ovid suspects readers find distracting.

Finally, in *Epistulae* 4.2, Ovid again describes having to force his hand to do his poetic bidding (28) and taking not even a pinch of pleasure in the results, either because his labors are “fruitless” or because “to dance in the dark or / to write a poem no one will read amount to the

⁵⁰ The same word Ovid uses to describe the unedited *Metamorphoses*.

⁵¹ Cicero uses a similar horse analogy to describe Isocrates’ different pedagogical methods with Ephorus and Theopompos, the first needing the spur, the latter the reins. In the *Brutus*, Cicero credits Isocrates with “filing down” Theopompos, as I showed in a footnote in chapter 2.

⁵² See also *Epistulae Ex Ponto* 4.15.33-4.

⁵³ But if not Ovid than someone imposed order at some stage, since the poems have almost a symmetrical ring composition. See Mark Possanza, “Editing Ovid: Immortal Works and Material Texts,” in *A Companion to Ovid*, ed. Knox, 311-326, for more on the various editorial hands that have touched Ovid’s corpus.

same thing” (33-4). Why be graceful once the f(l)ame goes out? Why move one’s various limbs in pleasing rhythm if no appreciative eyes are watching? Why not just flail about?

Several times in the *Epistulae Ex Ponto*, Ovid worries openly that his brutal depictions of his exilic environs present a land far too rough to be believed.⁵⁴ One could say the same of his constant disavowals of corpus care, and indeed, as I have shown, the book-rolls claim to be bound up—internally and externally—with the harshness of Tomis. (And if the one cannot be believed, then...) Throughout the course of his exilic corpora, Ovid works to maintain a rhetorical stance appropriate to his altered and then stationary circumstances. In the first few book-rolls of *Tristia*, he presents his lack of editing as a sound-minded choice not to expend energy on textual or poetic refinements unbefitting his *relegatus* status (Rome) or beyond the linguistic and aesthetic grasp of his hirsute new neighbors (Tomis). This responsiveness to *tempus* and *locus* shows an Ovid in tip-top rhetorical form. Increasingly, Ovid offers a new perspective on his refusals to refine, confessing to see his unintentional errors but to find their removal either impossible or irksome. His recurring protestations against corpus care function in nearly every poem as part of the exilic *epexergasia* through which he again and again works through his limited rhetorical options. In the very last poem of the exilic collection, he first rears up against someone back home who is tearing into his verses (literally or figuratively?). First boasting of the invulnerability of poetic *ingenium* and the invincibility of a poet’s fame, Ovid closes the poem by begging that this personification of envy cease ripping him apart: “what good is it to you to slip the steel into my *extinctos artus*?” (51). Since Ovid’s limbs (*artus*), and his artful skill (*ars*, *artis*) in joining them, have already died, one expects that this de-composition cannot harm him, but Ovid feels every wound keenly.

⁵⁴ 3.9.50, 4.9.69-88, 4.10.35-6, also *Tristia* 3.10.35-6.

4.2 CORRECTING HIMSELF

“A poem is never finished, only abandoned.” Paul Valéry

Though we have permission to treat Ovid as a hostile witness, he testifies in *Tristia* 2 that his work had been humming along on the *Fasti* (a poem about the Roman national calendar) and the *Metamorphoses* when Augustus’ lightning bolt struck him out of the blue. Ovid narrates, avoiding the language of publishing:

I wrote (*scripsi*) six little book-rolls (*libellos*) of the *Fasti* and as many again, / and each roll (*volumen*) covers a month, / and it was written (*scriptum*) recently under your name, Caesar, / and dedicated to you, the work interrupted (*rupit opus*) by my lot. (*Tristia* 2.549-552).

And I have spoken about (*dictaque*)—although it failed to receive the final hand (*manus ultima*)— / bodies turned into new faces (*facies corpora versa novas*). (2.555-6)

The “final hand” refers to those last finishing touches that are manually administered with the metaphorical *pumex* or *lima*. Both the *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses* want for completion, but Ovid emphasizes the inchoate state of the latter throughout the *Tristia* (1.1.116-121, 1.7.12-40, 2.62, 3.14.19-24, 4.10.63), while he mentions the former only here.⁵⁵ Why continually dwell on the *Metamorphoses* being “*sine fine*” (without finish, 2.63)? Peter Knox doubts Ovid left the *Metamorphoses* in a shabby state—“[t]he composition of this masterpiece was surely the preoccupation of the years immediately preceding his exile”⁵⁶—but, leaving aside the bothersome issue of Ovid’s sincerity, what rhetorical angles does Ovid’s classification of the *Metamorphoses* as a work in progress open up?

⁵⁵ For more on the various layers of Ovid’s construction of the *Fasti*, see Elaine Fantham, “Ovid, Germanicus, and the Composition of the *Fasti*”, in *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies: Ovid*, 373-414; esp. p. 376, 391-4, 398-9, 410, 412, 414. See also the epilogue of Nita Krevans’ forthcoming book with Princeton University Press, tentatively titled *The Poet as Editor*.

⁵⁶ Peter E. Knox, “A Poet’s Life,” in *A Companion to Ovid*, ed. Peter E. Knox, 6.

In the introductory poem to the first book-roll of *Tristia* (and thus of the whole corpus), Ovid relies on a pun to anthropomorphize the volume—a “*parvus liber*” is a small book-roll, but a “*parvus liber*” is a small child⁵⁷—and continually goads and directs it in the imperative mood as he readies it for Rome. He figures this preparation as a pep talk more than a Catullan or Horatian pumicing. The last encounter the book-roll should make when it arrives “home” (that is, at Ovid’s house) and joins its “brothers” (*fratres*, 107) in the round book-roll cases (*scrinia curva*, 106) is with the “three by five volumes about changing forms (*mutatae formae*), / poems recently snatched (*rapta*) from my funeral” (117-8): the *Metamorphoses*. Ovid commands his exilic book-roll to “tell” those volumes that “the face (*vultum*, the “about-face”, really) of my fortune can be regarded among those changed bodies” (*mutata corpora*, 119-120). Is Ovid attempting to insert his own tale of transformation into his book-rolls? And what about the snatching that spared the book-rolls from death?

Ovid again couches the *Metamorphoses*’ incompleteness in corpus care terms in the seventh poem. He asks that sympathetic readers alter the face of his image (*imagine vultus*, 1) on whatever objects they possess (or to which they have access)—busts exhibited in libraries and portraits on book-roll covers are likely what he means—taking away the bacchic ivy draped around his temples (*temporibus...meis*, 3). If such readers wish to behold a better likeness (*maior imago*, 11)—recall that Isocrates called speech an *eikôn* of the soul in *Nicocles* §7—Ovid

⁵⁷ Considered metrically, it is a visual pun but not an aural one, as the ‘i’ has a different length. Whereas Horace’s *liber* in *Epistulae* 1.20 was a freed-slave-like book-roll, I find the “child” pun more persuasive in Ovid, since he openly calls his book-rolls his children and himself their parent throughout the *Tristia*. See Mary Davisson, “Parents and Children in Ovid’s Poems from Exile,” *The Classical World* 78.2 (November-December 1984): 111-114, for more on this paternal approach.

bids them to read his poems: “these I enjoin you to read, such as they are (*qualiacumque*),⁵⁸ these poems speaking of the changed forms of humans (*mutates hominum dicentia formas*), / the work interrupted (*rupit opus*) by the unlucky flight (*fuga*) of their master” (12-4). Ovid has only just described the *Fasti* as “*rupit opus*”, and then, as here, *opus* pertains both to Ovid’s poetic labor and its product, the text. He then confesses to having thrown the “*meritos libellos*” (deserving little book-rolls, 19) on the fire as he prepared to leave the city, “either because I had come to detest the Muses, on account of my crime, / or because the poem itself was still growing and undeveloped” (*crescens et rude*, rough; 21-2). When does a poem stop growing and filling out? Through what methods does a poem develop from *rudis* (rough, raw, crude) to *doctum* (learned), *incultum* to *cultum*? And what about Ovid’s earlier revelation that the *Metamorphoses* had been “snatched” from his funeral pyre?

He tells us: “since they were not altogether snuffed out, but still exist—/ many copies had been written, I reckon—/ I now pray that they may live on and delight the unlazy leisure of the reading public / and remind them of me. / They are not able, however, to be read patiently by any, / if unaware that they have gone without the final hand (*summam manum*). / The work (*opus*) was taken away in the middle of its hammering (*incudibus*) / and the final file (*ultima lima*) was denied to my writings (*scriptis*)” (23-9).⁵⁹ Ovid induces readers to reframe what

⁵⁸ Compare with Catullus 1.9-10: “*Quare habe tibi quidquid hoc libelli / qualecumque...*”. Ovid also uses “*qualiacumque*” in the very first poem of the collection (1.1.46), “*qualemcumque*” at *Tristia* 3.14.51 and “*quodcumque*” at *Epistulae Ex Ponto* 1.1.14 to similarly demonstrate his nervous reliance on reader judgments.

⁵⁹ My impulse is to splutter these questions: why would Ovid have permitted copies to be made of a poem that was inchoate and incomplete? How many (*pluribus*) copies would have been made? How widely would they have been circulated such that someone unaware (*nesciet*) of Ovid’s circumstances might read them? In what state *is* the poem we call the *Metamorphoses*? Was it, as Ovid says, yanked out from under (*ablatum*) his instruments of editing? Is finality always an imposition of an end rather than a reaching of a terminus? To ask such questions is to

seems to be a magisterial poem as a gangly rough draft instead. His editorial tools—unjustly denied to this work—include the *lima*, a favorite of Horace, and a new activity to add to the turning of the lathe and chisel, prominent in the Greek tradition: hammering. If Ovid can lead readers to think, no, to *marvel at* what the *Metamorphoses* could have been had he only been able to edit it properly, he can put them in a sympathetic mood toward more than that text. Cultivating this attitude in his reader early on in the *Tristia* serves Ovid well throughout the course of his exilic writings, in which he often seems to prompt readers to sigh counterfactually, “If only Ovid were in Rome and not out there in the rough...”

In the next lines, we learn that Ovid wants not only sympathetic indulgence, but also editorial assistance. As well as taking up the incomplete corpus, he wants the reader to:

take these six lines also, to be placed at the head (*frons*) of the first book-roll / if you approve: / ‘You who touch (*tangis*) these volumes bereft of their parent, / to them at least let a place be granted in your city. / And your favor will be all the greater, since these were not published (*non edita*) by him, / but snatched (*raptā*) as if from their master’s funeral. / Therefore, whatever faults (*vitii*) this rough (*rude*) song will have, / they would have been emended (*emendaturus*), if it had been permitted’ (33-40).

Once placed *in primi fronte libelli*, these lines will be a literal pre(-)face. This textual face-lift changes the look of flaws by casting the dark pall of exile over the whole *Metamorphoses*. Ovid highlights the tangibility of his incomplete efforts (*tangis*), again uses the text-as-abandoned-child figuration, and emphasizes that he did not authorize its circulation (*non edita*) or get the time to edit the text before it was pulled from him. Thinking literally, Joseph Farrell points out that the “[a]lteration of the poem thus depends on possession of a physical copy of the text. It is as if Ovid, having burned his autograph, were unable to alter his own poem, while anyone else who may have obtained one of the other versions in circulation might revise it *ad libitum*.”⁶⁰ Ovid must persuade readers to do his editorial bidding in Rome because he no longer can.

spin around in idle curiosity and, more importantly, to take the bait Ovid here dangles; he pulls readers into his representation of the *Metamorphoses* as unfinished.

⁶⁰ Farrell, “The Ovidian *Corpus*: Poetic Body and Poetic Text,” 141.

Stephen Hinds argues more thoroughly than I do here that 1.7 “is a poem about how the *Metamorphoses* can be redeployed, how it can be rewritten, to reflect the circumstances of Ovid’s exile, and thus, ultimately, help him book his trip home.”⁶¹ Ovid continues, though, to reflect on the incompleteness of the *Metamorphoses* in later book-rolls, both in the lines from *Tristia* 2 cited above and also in 3, 4, and 5.

In 3.14, the *Metamorphoses* morphs into one of several works that require a stern hand, both to whip it into shape and to protect it. Ovid addresses an unnamed benefactor (most likely his literary agent, Brutus) who is refining, readying, assembling (*conficio*, 5) Ovid’s poems, all except that “*Ars* that ruined its artificer” (6). *Conficio*, like *epexergazomai*, means “finishing off” in either the sense of bringing through to completion or killing, and aptly captures the precarious position of Ovid’s literary legacy. Calling his little book-rolls his body and emphasizing (again) their orphan status, Ovid urges:

so far as you’re able, keep my corpus in the city. / Flight (*fuga*) was decreed to me, flight was not decreed to my little book-rolls (*libellis*), / which did not deserve their master’s punishment. [10] / Often is a father exiled on a foreign shore, yet / those things born of him (*natis*) are permitted to be in the city. / Pallas-fashion were my poems created by me without a mother; / these are my offspring, my family. / These I commend to you, of which, the more bereft of their parent they are, [15] / the greater burden (*sarcina maior*) they will be to you, their guardian (*tutori*⁶²). / Three of my children (*nati*) have caught my contagion: / make the rest of the crowd⁶³ openly your care (*curae*). / There are also three by five volumes (*volumina*) on changing forms (*mutatae formae*), / poems snatched (*raptae*) from the funeral of their master. [20] / That work (*opus*), had I not perished beforehand, / might have gained a more secure name (*certius nomen*) from my finishing hand (*summa manu*): / but now uncorrected/unsmoothed (*incorrectum*) it has come upon the people’s mouths, / if anything of mine is on the mouth of the people. (8-24) (trans. Loeb with changes)

Ovid’s book-rolls sprang Athena-like from his head, but unlike the goddess of war and wisdom, his children are not fully formed. The less parental attention his book-rolls have received, the more they need a guiding and guarding hand. *Sarcina* (16) refers to the burdensome nature of

⁶¹ Hinds, “Booking the Return Trip”, 437.

⁶² At the end of *Brutus*, Cicero calls himself and Brutus “the guardians (*tutores*) of orphaned eloquence” and lets rip one doozie of an extended metaphor (§330). See Stroup for analysis of the personification of *Eloquentia* in *Brutus* (chapter 8).

⁶³ Also in *Brutus*, Brutus refers to Cicero’s output as a “crowd of volumes” (§123).

tidying and bundling the literary output of a destroyed man, but the word specifically pertains to the burden of a womb; in *Tristia* 1.1.126, Ovid tells his little book-roll that it will be a “*sarcina laturo magna*” (a big burden to be borne), and here we see the labor pains. The addressee of this poem is asked to carry unfinished works to term. Athena is not the only divinity who finished gestating in Zeus. The other is Dionysos, whom Zeus stitched into his thigh after accidentally killing the fetus’ mother; corrected and re-released, Ovid’s poems, like Dionysos, will be “twice-born.”⁶⁴

He asks, therefore, not only for legal guardianship, but also for surrogacy, a risky proposition under the circumstances. (*Sarcina* also means “sorrow” or “trouble” and as such is a synonym for “*tristia*.”)⁶⁵ The *Ars* may be beyond help, but the others need care. First among them is the *Metamorphoses*, which, Ovid repeats, was “snatched” from his funeral before he was able to smooth them out lovingly with his finishing touches. Accordingly, they have an “uncertain name”—this could be a pun, as their title is “Changes”—and in an uncorrected state are being read and talked about by the people, if at all. The incompleteness of the massive, fifteen-book-rolled corpus offers Ovid an excuse to continue preparing it to meet with readers and peppering it with new tales of transformation. He has suggested his own tale be inserted (1.1), attempted to add a preface (1.7), and asked his literary executor to help his still growing works reach maturity. The metamorphic qualities of his own fortune and appearance gives Ovid reason to explore it in book-rolls 4 and 5, but before moving on to them, I return to 1.1 and 2.

The full force of the request at *Tristia* 1.1.119-120 (consider my own *mutatio* among the changed forms) and the description of *Metamorphoses*’ content at 2.555-6 registers

⁶⁴ Ovid calls upon Bacchus to intercede with Apollo in *Tristia* 5.3

⁶⁵ In *Epistulae* 1.13, where a donkey-like creature transports Horace’s book-rolls to Augustus, Horace describes the load with this same word.

retrospectively for the reader, especially the reader who has a copy of the *Metamorphoses* unrolled alongside the *Tristia*, which is not inconceivable for either an ancient or modern connoisseur of Ovid. An intriguing inversion leaps out when one compares the opening two lines of the *Metamorphoses* with the aforementioned two lines in *Tristia* 2. The *Metamorphoses* opens with: “My soul bears up to speak about forms changed into new / bodies...” (*In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas / corpora...*, 1-2). But in *Tristia* 2, Ovid reverses the order, and around the transformative action of a verb with textual (and, as I argued of this verb’s function in Catullus c. 50, *editorial*) resonance, no less: bodies are turned (*versa*), and not into new forms (*formas*) but into new faces (*facies*). He might have three faces in mind: the *frons* (front, forehead, face) of the *Metamorphoses* itself (he has asked the reader to insert a pre(-)face), that of his exilic textual corpus, and his own. The latter two faces closely resemble one another. For one, both bear hair (*hirsutus* at *Tristia* 1.1.12, *hirta* at 1.3.90), which is against their custom. For two, as we read on, we see the book-rolls and their author slowly come to resemble a swan.

“Already my temples (*mea tempora*) imitate a swan’s plumage, / and white old age bleaches my black hair,” Ovid reports (*Tristia* 4.8.1-2), and a few poems later he opens his fifth exilic book-roll by deeming it a swansong (5.1.11). The sound and sense of the book-roll mimics the sight of its author. Ovid’s swanification itself resembles another famous anthropo-avian transformation in Roman poetry, and not in his *Metamorphoses*, but in Horace’s *Odes*.⁶⁶ As the reader unfurls the final poem of the second book-roll of the *Odes*, Horace himself takes a turn:

This is no ordinary, no flimsy wing which will bear / me, half-bard, half-bird, through the liquid air, / nor shall I longer remain on the earth, / but, grown too large for envy, I shall leave // its cities. I, who am of the blood of poor parents, [5] / I, who come at your command, / my beloved Maecenas, shall not die, / nor be confined by the waves of

⁶⁶ See also Virgil’s *Eclogue* 9.35-6: *nam neque adhuc Vario videor nec dicere Cinna / digna, sed argutos inter strepere anser olores*.

the Styx. // Already, even now, rough skin is forming / on my legs, my upper part is changing [10] / into a white swan and smooth feathers / are sprouting along my fingers and shoulders. // Already more famous than Icarus, son of Daedalus, / I shall visit, a harmonious bird, the shores / of the moaning Bosphorus, the Gaetulian Syrtes, [15] / and the Hyperborean plains. // The Colchian will know me, and the Dacian who pretends / not to fear a cohort of Marsians, the Geloni / at the ends of the earth, the learned Iberian, / the Rhone-swigger. [20] // Let there be no dirges or squalid mourning / or lamentation at my corpseless funeral. / Check your cries of grief and do not trouble / with the empty honor of a tomb. (*Odes* 2.20; trans. David West)

There are far too many elegant echoes of this poem in Ovid's exilic writings for me to catalogue them all here with the care they deserve, but the most pertinent ones are that Ovid, too, has left the earth's cities, being now in a place that is the very antithesis of the Roman *urbs* and its urbanity, and hence clanking with all manner of foreign peoples. Ovid writes often of his book-rolls' peregrinations, not just to and around Rome, but all over the sprawling empire. That poets' issue "winged words" has been fluttering in the air since Homer, but flapping alongside the winged words in this Horatian ode and in many of Ovid's works is doomed Icarus.⁶⁷ In the middle of book-roll eight of the *Metamorphoses*, by-standers watch Icarus flail through the air and into the sea, his wing-wax melted from getting too near the sun and the whole ingenious device now entangled with his limbs and dragging him under. Ovid is a Daedalus to his poems, which are both pieces of his engineering and his children, and an Icarus in his own sad tale. Further, we have been told, repeatedly, that the *Metamorphoses* was snatched from Ovid's funeral pyre; a totally corpseless funeral then, as Ovid did not actually die either.⁶⁸ (Though Ovid calls his situation a kind of death.) And Ovid credits all his work with granting him immortality.

Ovid, "*mutata*" and "*versa*" (changed and turned), is rightly agitated. When he thinks of his "*mutata*" (4.1.99), his "*manus demens* (mad hand), furious at itself and my pursuit, / sends my poems into the blazing hearth. / And so, since not many of them survive, / you should read them, whoever you are, with ready goodwill" (101-7). As he did with his *Metamorphoses*, out of

⁶⁷ Ovid wishes he had wings in *Tristia* 3.8; see also *Tristia* 1.1.88-90 for an Icarus reference.

⁶⁸ See Ovid's instructions for his memorial at *Tristia* 3.3.

anger with his situation and displeasure with their incompleteness, so he does with most of his exilic works. The “final hand” offers a poem either editorial care or utter destruction (almost). Near the end of the *Tristia*, Ovid again mentions the corrective flame. Just as when he was young, his “Muse cannot be held back from composing poems. / I write and then destroy the written little book-rolls in the fire: / a small ash heap is the final product of my pursuit. / I am not able and yet I long to lead out no more verses: / and so my labor is placed on the fire, / and not unless part crawls out of the flame by chance or cunning / will my *ingenium* reach you. / If only likewise my *Ars*, which ruined a teacher who feared nothing of the kind, / had been turned (*versa*) to cinders.” (5.12.59-68). In c. 36, Catullus played around with what sort of “bad” verses deserve to be torched, and here we feel the heat of Ovid’s anger that he did not burn the poem that has caused all subsequent editorial/funeral pyres, though of course he had no inkling of its catastrophic potential at the time. He also manages to sneak in another note to the reader to treat any verses that reach Rome with kindness, since they represent a dying breed. The threat of scarcity always drives up value.

In the *Tristia*, Ovid repeatedly characterizes his fifteen book-rolls on change as still changing, not yet rendered static by the stiffening preservative of polish and cedar oil. By “*sine fine*” (without finish), he means not only that they lack polish, but also that they lack an ending, for his ending is their ending. His end is also their new beginning, if readers insert the preface he provides them. The standardized *Metamorphoses* we have today begins not with a sorrowful preface but with an announcement of scope, that the text will treat of changes from the hurly burly churning of chaos and leading “*ad mea tempora*” (to my own times, 4). Ovid also characterizes the poem as a *carmen perpetuum* (4): does a perpetual song end only when its

singer does?⁶⁹ Variations on “*ad mea tempora*” spring up all over the *Tristia* (1.1.4: *temporibus huius*; 1.7.4: *temporibus meis*; 4.1.105: *mea tempora*; 4.8.1: *mea tempora*), and the phrase sometimes refers to “my times” and other times to “my temples.”⁷⁰ *Tempus*, just like the Greek *kairos*, most often refers to time, but it can refer to a vital part of the body, that is, a part of the body most sensitive to penetrative weapons, like the neck or the head. Ovid’s white hair springs from his temples and his times. As Jo-Marie Claassen poignantly recognizes in her writings about exiles, people expelled from their homelands experience a trauma and often age prematurely. However striking and irreversible the transformation of Ovid’s literal corpus, his literary corpora continue to flux, a reflection of at least one *tempus*.

Ovid’s persistent appraisal of his *Metamorphoses* as unfinished demonstrates the power of the metonymic dynamic between his fibrous corpus and his fleshy one: both will undergo more change because of his exile. Though he invites readers to help him edit the *Metamorphoses* by adding a preface and perhaps too an epilogue about his swanification, any alterations Ovid makes to his exilic writings he makes alone, as he continually reminds his readers. It is to the sociality once produced by and enabling poetic composition, editorial preparation, and textual circulation—and now lost—that I next turn.

4.3 POETIC SODALITY AND SOLIDARITY

A certain convention of academic writing receives pride of place in either the acknowledgment segment of a book or the first or last footnote of an article, some form or other of: “thanks to [insert friendly critics here] for providing excellent feedback on an earlier version and straightening me out on the few key points, though of course all remaining errors are solely

⁶⁹ See the end of the *Metamorphoses* (lines 871ff) for Ovid’s prediction of his long (literary) life.

⁷⁰ Hinds, “Booking the Return Trip,” f.n. 24, 434, notices this doubling, but considers only 1.1.4 and 1.7.4 and does not go into *kairos*.

my responsibility.” If Ovid is not the first writer to suffer the entailments of that arrangement, he is certainly the most notorious one. Though what is both a practical and textual convention for us was not yet so clearly one in antiquity, there are snatches of evidence here and there that ancient writers relied on trusted others to look over a text before putting it out in public.⁷¹ For example, at least thirty years before Horace advocates editing with friends in the *Ars Poetica*, Cicero relies on the collaboratively editorial aspect of poetics to dispense advice about deed-doing and decision-making in his philosophical treatise, *De Officiis*: we should approach our plans like poets their verse, submitting them to the scrutiny of trusted friends so that all mistakes can be caught and corrected (1.147.21ff).⁷² The interactive nature of poetic editing must have been proverbial to Romans, as Cicero never deploys analogies grounded in unfamiliar territory.

Yet, only Ovid is made to assume full responsibility for his friend-aided poetic crime. The convention of collaborative editing proves irresistible to him as a *topos*, as he can play up two important implications. Its being now lost to him, he edits alone and without the goad of the ear, so readers should cut him some slack. Further, if those esteemed people with whom he formally swapped verses or to whom he bared his own are truly his friends, they should share his burden by speaking up for him, or at least by protecting his poetic legacy. Corpus care for the relegated Ovid opens up to include the sheltering care others can give to his unprotected poetic corpus.

⁷¹ Starr and Gurd, whom I cited in the introduction, provide key looks at the stages of ancient textual circulation.

⁷² “Just as painters and figure-makers and even poets too want their work (*opus*) scrutinized by people, so that, in the event that something is deemed faulty (*reprehensum*) by many, it can be corrected (*corrigatur*, “smoothed out”), and asking not only themselves but also those with them and still others too what is mistaken (*peccatum*) about it, so we rely on the judgment of others when making and not making and altering and correcting (*facienda et non facienda et mutanda et corrigenda*)” our work, our decisions, ourselves. A person’s character and reputation are like a work of art.

With the exception of *Tristia* 3.14 (partially treated above), Ovid depicts all the editing of his post-relegation writings as undertaken alone, and more burdensome than his increasingly “*gracilis corpus*”⁷³ can handle, as I showed previously. In 3.14.25-52, Ovid asks the literary benefactor who bundles up his writings—except the *Ars*, but seemingly including Ovid’s exilic writings up to that point—as a sort of definitive collection of sorts (or maybe even an uncomfortably premature retrospective) to insert an explanatory prologue:

Add to my little book-rolls (*libellis*) this humble bit also, [25] / which comes to you dispatched from a far distant world. / Whoever reads them—if anyone reads them—let him take into account beforehand / at what time and in what place it was composed. / He will be fair-minded to writings (*scriptis*) that he knows to be / composed in time of exile and of a barbarian place: [30] / and amid so many adverse circumstances he will be amazed / that I had the heart to write with sorrowing hand any poems.⁷⁴ / Misfortunes have broken my *ingenium*, whose source, even before, / was unproductive and whose stream was meager. / But such as it is, with none to exercise it, [35] / it has shrunk and is lost, dried up by long neglect. / Nor here have I an abundance of book-rolls (*librorum copia*) to stimulate and nourish me: / rather than book-rolls, bows and arms clang out. / There is nobody in this land, should I recite my verse, of / whose intelligent ears (*intellecturis auribus*) I might avail myself here, [40] / no place to which I may withdraw. The guard on the wall / and a closed gate keep back the hostile Getae. / Often I am at a loss for a word, a name, a place, / and there’s none who can inform me. / Often when I try to say something—shameful to confess— [45] / words fail me as if I’ve unlearned my power of speech (*loqui*). / Thracian and Scythian mouths chatter on almost every side, / and I seem to be able to write (*scribere*) in Getic measure. / Believe me, I fear that Sinitic and Pontic words may be mixed / with the Latin in my writings (*scriptis*). [50] / Such as my little book-roll (*libellum*) is, then, deem it worthy of indulgence / and pardon it because of the circumstance of my fate. (trans. Loeb, with changes)

Within this editorial supplement (for whose placement he relies on a loyal friend), Ovid nestles the narrative of his solitary composition circumstances. Imagine a bookish person like himself not having access to roll after roll of reading material! Also, no one can act as his sounding board, since there are no “*intellecturis auribus*” within earshot. Lacking the linguistic flow that opens up when one composes with helpful and learned friends, Ovid dries up, becoming nearly speechless. His writing, meanwhile, becomes choppy, dicey, even, as non-Latin words slice in like the barbarians they are. Of all these difficulties readers of his exilic verses must be informed

⁷³ “*gracili corpore*” at *Epistulae* 1.5.52 (contrasted to his strong *mens*) and 1.10.21.

⁷⁴ Compare with *Tristia* 1.1.35-48. Ovid thus showcases precisely what reader reactions he hopes to provoke by representing the rough circumstances of exilic poetic creation and referring again and again to their lack of editing. It is an explicit rhetorical strategy.

or reminded, and no doubt they will be aghast as Ovid's sad situation and all the more impressed with his being able to eke out anything at all.

Again Ovid pines for "*auribus accipiat verba Latina*" (ears accepting/ comprehending of Latin words, *Tristia* 4.1.90) and grumbles that he must both address and critique himself. "For and to myself alone—what else can I do?—I write and read, / and my letters are guarded (*tutaque*) by my own judgment" (*iudicio suo*, 91-2). Auto-criticism in exile has not been Ovid's strong suit; as we have seen, in frustration he typically turns to ash anything that needs more work than he can give. Ovid drops straggling hints, though, that his exilic works are, despite all their author's infelicities,⁷⁵ being enjoyed by Roman readers. For example, toward the end of *Tristia*, Ovid writes in recognition of a letter from a well-wisher who encourages him to keep up his efforts (5.12). After a slew of literary allusions (why, that's like asking Priam to applaud the death of his sons! *etc.*), Ovid wonders if this friend's attempt at persuasion (*suades*, 43) stems from the current success his earlier exilic works are enjoying in Rome (*bene*, 43, and *successus*, 44). Ovid professes to be torn. Though desirous to oblige this request, he again mentions being woefully without book or ear (*non liber, non aurem*) and shivers to think he might be losing his Latin and learning the harsh language of the even harsher locals (5.12.53-8).⁷⁶ Writing well grows more and more difficult.

Adding to his pains, it seems that few of Ovid's companions want to have anything to do with him, let alone spin long paper trails across the empire for some Augustan crony to discover. In the penultimate poem of *Tristia*, Ovid chides a (former?) friend for not sending any consolatory letters to him, for not making any contact at all after the sad news broke. Ovid

⁷⁵ See William, "Representations of the Book-Roll", 182-184, on the richness of "*infelix*" as a literary adjective in Ovid's exilic corpora.

⁷⁶ See also *Tristia* 5.7.53-64, *inter alia*.

presents this unnamed associate with a communication analogy: just as we used to stay up all night talking, “so now should our letters bring back and forth our silent voices, / and our paper and our hands (*charta manusque*) should carry out the function of our tongues” (5.13.27-30). Throughout the *Epistulae Ex Ponto*, Ovid presents his letters as replacements for his tongue and for his physical presence.⁷⁷ And *corpus care* appears in various ways, as well. For instance, Ovid pleads with the callously unwriting addressee of 5.13: “Correct this, I pray! And if you correct this one thing, / there will be no blemish on an exceptional body (*corpore*)” (13-4).

The ears in *Tristia* are syecdochic for all the editorial bodies in Rome who would hear him out when his verses were rough and snatch him up when his verses were finished, and few poems reveal their respective addressees. The ears in the *Epistulae Ex Ponto*, however, are specific, and Ovid names names. He openly concedes in the opening poem of his *Epistulae* that though no one back home wants to be revealed by name (*non occultato nomine*) in these forthcoming letters, they cannot prevent it (*sed nec prohibere potestis*). He shirks responsibility with a poetic smirk: even he cannot prevent it, since it is his Muse who refuses to abdicate her duty to call upon them all by name and thank them for their various past kindnesses to him (1.1.17-20). The *Epistulae Ex Ponto* are open letters, public letters, written for the public eye and not just for whomever Ovid plainly names; we learn that Ovid is all the time sending private prose letters, too (4.2.5-6).

In these public letters, Ovid (rein)forces the bonds of friendship. He writes to a whole range of contacts, from the children of the man who first encouraged him to publish his poems—like Maximus,⁷⁸ whose head Ovid kissed when Maximus was a baby and who now resembles his

⁷⁷ 1.2.6 (“*epistula...loquar tecum*”); 1.7.1 (“*littera pro verbis*”); 2.6.1 (“*qui praesens voce solebat*”); 2.6.3-4 (exile’s letters are his tongue); 4.9.11-12.

⁷⁸ 1.2, 2.3. Messalinus is Maximus’ brother (2.2)

father in eloquence—to associates he had not known for long but whom he understands to be deeply troubled by his situation.⁷⁹ Luigi Galasso compares Ovid’s technique to that of a blackmailer (Ovid *is* using the blackmailer’s medium),⁸⁰ but Ovid divulges the potentially damaging “secret” of their acquaintance with him before extracting what he wants. In simple terms, Ovid’s strategy amounts to: “well, now everyone knows of our connection, so you might as well help me.” Though he obliquely hints that his critics in Rome never discouraged him from publishing anything—that is, they are at least partly responsible for his *Ars* ever seeing the light of day—in two instances he is careful to isolate those naughty book-rolls. In one letter to the aforementioned Maximus and another to Maximus’ brother, Messalinus, Ovid recalls their approval of all his works, all *except* the *Ars* (“*exceptis domino qui nocuere suo*”, 1.2.133-6; “*Artibus exceptis*”, 2.2.103-4). It does not serve Ovid’s case to taint anyone by association to that work; he needs all his associates free to fight his battle.

At the beginning of *Epistulae*, Ovid wistfully recalls all the talking he used to do with his family and friends, whom he venerates (*quos sum veneratus*, 1.2.49-50). And it is precisely their speech that he calls upon, since his too-distant voice has failed to keep his case on the docket.⁸¹ Though hoping to be proved wrong, he calls himself “*dilecto Nasone*” (the formerly beloved Naso, 1.8.1), and underlying his constant appeals to memory is the hope that the emotions behind fond remembrance might be activated for present purposes. Every letter has a tie-in to Ovid’s past poeticizing, but because I must keep this chapter at a reasonable length, I isolate four recipients and four letters: Atticus (2.4), Macer (2.10), Severus (4.2), and Tuticanus (4.12).

⁷⁹ Salanus, 2.5, who—happy coincidence!—is well known around Rome for his eloquence, and Ovid describes him with words similar to those Horace uses self-reflexively at the end of *Odes* 1.1.

⁸⁰ Galasso, “*Epistulae Ex Ponto*,” 200.

⁸¹ Even his wife (3.1) and new son-in-law (4.8) are asked to do persuasive work on his behalf.

These four letters recommend themselves because they contain entreaties not for the addressees to try to move Caesar to move Ovid, but for them simply to remember their dear friend of old.

The letters do this memory work by linking past communicative intimacy either to past collaborative editing (Atticus, Tuticanus) or to the all-abiding bond of poetic solidarity (Macer, Severus, Tuticanus). Poets, particularly, must stick together and back one another. The glue? If it could happen to me, it could happen to you...

Atticus is to Ovid what Calvus was to Catullus or Quintilius to Horace, more or less (Ovid hopes more). Though Ovid does not want to doubt the steadfastness of his friend's support, he cannot help but wonder whether Atticus "remains mindful of your unlucky friend, / or has your care weakened and deserted its post?" (2.4.3-4). For his part, Ovid unceasingly engages his friend in his thoughts, even remembering certain facial expressions. Back in the day, they mixed bouts of joking with their serious talk, the too-short day struggling to hold their long verbal exchanges. They even managed to stuff some editorial activities into their word-packed agenda:

poems only just made (*factum modo*⁸²) often came to your ears (*ad auris*) / and a new Muse was subjected to your judgment (*iudicio*). / Those that you praised I deemed to have pleased the public already. / This was the sweet reward of my recent cares (*curae recentis*). / My book-roll having been scraped by the file (*lima rarus*) of a friend, / not just once were erasures (*litura*) made due to your advice" (13-18).

Atticus was that most treasured thing to a writer of Ovid's ilk: a predictor of public reception.

His approval was "sweet" and his editorial elbow-grease less savory, but nonetheless essential.

Ovid longingly recalls how inseparable they were, seen side by side all over Rome.⁸³

Surely even if Atticus swilled great gulps from the river Lethe, he would not forget; Ovid's fate cannot be as dark (*non candida*, 30) as all that. Even so, he ends the poem: "So that, however,

⁸² Like the kairotic deictic in Catullus 1.2.

⁸³ They are "*veterem sodalem*", from whence "sodality".

this faith of which I have spoken cannot be false / and my credulity stupid, look out for / and guard (*tutare*) your old companion with constant fidelity, / as it suits and as much as I will not be burdensome” (31-4). If everyone back in Rome did not know of their closeness—and, as they were seen together in the forum, the city’s strolling places, and at the theatre, who would not know?—they do now. Atticus should not betray an intimacy so close that Ovid let him hear, hold, and wear down his newest poetic additions. That Ovid uses the same verb of defense (*tutor*) here as he did in *Tristia* 3.14 and 4.1.92 with regard to the guardianship of his book-roll babies suggests that to protect him is to protect them. Ovid fully invests himself in the survival of his literary corpus.

Though it’s unclear whether Atticus is a poet—his knack for knowing what will please readers and skill with the file suggest so—there is no doubt about Macer. Ovid characterizes their relationship as one of long years (*longi aevi*, 2.10.9); if Macer does not recognize the imprint of Ovid’s signet ring in the letter’s waxy sealant or Ovid’s distinctive handwriting once he breaks the seal, it is only because Macer no longer cares for him (*cura mei*, 8). They are joined not only by a long acquaintance but also by family (Ovid’s current wife is related to Macer somehow) and poetic pursuit, though Macer has been wiser in his choices. Ovid credits him with writing on whatever details of the Trojan war Homer left out, thereby giving that great theme the “final hand” (*summa manu*, 14); in essence, perfecting Homer. (No mean feat, but no edgy feat, either.) Apparently, Macer has been sending his verses to Ovid in exile, allowing his stationary friend to travel to assorted locales and even to spy on the occasional nymph. Thinking back to his days in Rome, Ovid recounts their uncountable words, which even the long days of summer could not contain (where did Ovid find all this time to talk?), and hints at their conspiratorial giggling about doing particular though unspecified poetic deeds. Such memories

import Macer amidst the Black Sea's population, and Ovid hopes he will use his memories to import Ovid back to Rome, to dwell in his "remembering heart" (*memori pectore*, 52).

That Severus is a poet of high standing flusters Ovid (so he says) such that he has up to this point delayed mentioning his fellow poet and thus dedicating to him that very thing that Severus has in fertile abundance: verses. Ovid, meanwhile, struggles to flow against the clogging "silt of misfortune" (4.2.19); if even Homer had been cruelly deposited here he would have fared no better (21-2).⁸⁴ What Ovid especially misses is the goad of the ear: "a hearer stirs up zeal, and virtuosity grows with praise, / and *gloria* sports an immense spur" (35-6).⁸⁵ Being alone (*solus*, 39) and uninterested in loafing about, playing games, or drinking himself stupid, he tries to cultivate the infertile soil anew (44). While he scratches away with his writing tools, Ovid asks Severus to send on some product of his own recent care (*aliquod curae mitte recentis opus*, 50).

Tuticanus, whose name Ovid cannot gracefully squeeze into his meter, has for that reason not yet received a letter (4.12), and he is namelessly hailed in 4.14, too. In recompense for this waiting time, Ovid pours on the affect(at)ion, fondly recalling how he and Tuticanus had been friends since nearly boyhood and calling their bond fraternal. When Ovid was first getting hold of the reins of poetry with "tender hands" (*tenera manu*, 24), Tuticanus acted as "a good exhorter and leader and companion" (23), and "often I corrected (*correx*i) my little book-rolls based on your censure (*censore*), / often, based on your admonishments, (*admonitu*) I made erasures" (25-6). Tuticanus, meanwhile, produced faultless sheets (*chartis*, 27) worthy of Homer. In showcasing only his own faults, Ovid emphasizes his reliance on his friend for aid and flatters Tuticanus' comparative perfection. From a green, early age to a late, white-haired one, they

⁸⁴ See *Tristia* 1.1.47-8: no doubt were Homer here, his *ingenium* would fall away, too.

⁸⁵ A partial echo of *Tristia* 4.12.37-38.

shared this “continuity” and “concord” of poetic and interpersonal interest (29), and “unless this moves you (*te moveant*), then I will think your heart to be made of hard (*duro*) iron / or encased by unconquerable steel” (31-2). Has Tuticanus shut himself up from Ovid’s entreaties? Ovid thinks not, imagining his friend asking: “what it is you seek?” Yet, in his wretched state, Ovid does not know what he wants or what is most useful or advantageous, since “*prudentia*” (47), an invaluable rhetorical asset, has left him completely. Ovid advises Tuticanus, therefore, to make inquiries on his behalf as to what can be done to ameliorate his sad situation (49-50).

Those four letters offer a thumbnail sketch of Ovid’s letter-writing persona, varying quotients of pushy and pathetic, while showing his particular reliance on (the myth of?) poetic solidarity. Fairly early on in his “letters”, Ovid exclaims woefully that “*amicitia*” (friendship) has degraded herself into a “*meretrix*” (prostitute), turning tricks for favor and gain (2.3.19-20). This indictment of friendship’s honor speaks to Ovid’s mounting frustrations that none of his former companions have stepped in to help him, figuring there is only trouble to be had from doing so, even though that would not deter a true friend. As all his *Epistulae* are collated and circulated around Rome, readers (apparently) grow weary of the repetitive pleading,⁸⁶ but, as I explained above, Ovid intends for each letter to function as its own persuasive piece, even at the expense of the variegated artfulness of the whole collection.

4.4 CONCLUSION

“The more you try to erase me, the more, the more, the more that I appear.” Thom Yorke “The Eraser”

Try as Romans may have done to rub Ovid from the wax tablets of their memories, there is something insuppressible, indelible, unerasable about him: his indefatigable verses. With

⁸⁶ See 3.7, 3.9, 4.15.

every attempt to write him off, however big (*relegatio*) or small (not answering his letters), he redoubles his efforts, discomfiting though (he says) they are. His book-rolls circulate around Rome, calling on and calling out his friends of old and keeping his name and perhaps his ca(u)se alive. That he responds to reactions from readers beyond his at one time close circle of elite friends means his work is being copied and evaluated, a tremendous coup against Augustus even if a hollow victory for our disheveled exile. We, still today, hold the notes of his *carmen perpetuum*.

Being recalled to Rome was indeed a pressing short-term rhetorical goal, but Ovid also had a mind toward the larger scheme of things. Tucked in amidst the various forms of Ovid's exilic *epexergasia* are bold assertions of wide textual spread and influence in his own time and then after.⁸⁷ One pronouncement with a lovely mix of tenderness and sassiness occurs at the end of *Tristia* 3.7, a poem Ovid addresses to the quickly prepared "*littera*" (letters, 2) he sends off to his daughter by marriage, Perilla. Perilla loves her books (4) and writes her own verse; when he could, Ovid acted as a critic, teacher, and encourager of her productions (23-26). Afraid his exile has turned her against poetry, he puts on a brave face, asserting the freedom of his mind from Caesar's jurisdiction (48) and binding his fame/name to the worldwide spread of mighty Rome (52-4). If Augustus cannot even keep Ovid barred from Rome, how can he possibly control the poet's travel to and reception within other regions? As Matthew McGowan puts it, "the power of Augustus ends where the artistry of Ovid's verse begins."⁸⁸ Ovid's book-rolls, chock-a-block

⁸⁷ *Tristia*: 1.6.35; 2.7 (public wanted to know him); 2.119-120 (the *doctus* of Rome know him); 3.3 (Ovid's death, his epitaph); 3.7.43-54 (Caesar cannot chain his mind or control his fame); 4.10; 5.7.30; 5.9.6; 5.14 (his letters to his wife a "*monumenta libellis*"). *Epistulae*: 2.6.33-4; 3.2.27-36; 4.8.43-54; 4.10.7-8; 4.16.3-4 and 45-6. The end of the *Metamorphoses* boasts the most striking example.

⁸⁸ McGowan, *Ovid in Exile*, 213.

with his *exilis* corpus, perpetuate his presence and keep his name on people's minds, if not their lips.

In this chapter, I have proposed the concept “exilic *epexergasia*” and established three layers of its operation within *Tristia* and *Epistulae Ex Ponto*: repeated representations of his refusal to care for his corpus, repeated attempts to finish off his *Metamorphoses*, and repeated reliance on the ties that bond poets to others in their social circle, particularly the sociality of editing. Through this rhetorical repetition, Ovid displays his endurance; he is one hardwearing poet. And the amount, length, and complexity of his various exclamations of tiring would nearly make one chuckle at the incongruity, if not for the nagging feeling that Ovid got a raw deal.

CONCLUSION

Patricia Bizzell, co-editor of the most corpulent anthology of primary sources in rhetorical studies, has knowingly declared that “the rhetorical tradition is always being edited.”¹ This is not only a winking reference to her own workload, but also a recognition of ongoing deliberations over the insertion of new characters and concerns into rhetoric’s acknowledged roster. Neither static nor erratic, this list occasionally opens for the introduction of new figures (be they people or linguistic structures) or the reinterpretation of approved ones. That I have attempted to edit rhetoric’s roster by adding to it ancient attitudes and approaches toward editing is a happy coincidence of phrasing.

Though each preceding chapter fixed on an individual ancient writer—Isocrates, Catullus, Horace, and Ovid, respectively—I hope none of the chapters proceeded like an impassioned reemphasis on or plea for its central figure’s canonical enshrinement. For, more than the writers themselves, the overarching and unifying feature of corpus care—representations of textual treatments that assume a bodily idiom—has been the object of my study. Because writers deploy corpus care for the purposes of personally valid persuasive work, however, I have devoted attention in each chapter to their respective circumstances of composition. Each writer offered an “in” on how the editorial facet of literary materiality can take on a rhetorical dimension with aesthetic and ethical charge. Isocrates carefully managed a strain of philoponic

¹ Patricia Bizzell, “Editing the Rhetorical Tradition,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 36.2 (2003): 109. The hefty anthology—*The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. 2nd Edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000)—is co-edited by Bruce Herzberg and weighs in at a lumbering 1673 pages.

rhetoric, which he put underway to demonstrate the hard work and worthiness of producing peerless *logoi* on broadly relevant political topics. Catullus promoted an abrasive poetics that showcased the editorial refinements of his little book-roll and the shoddiness of unedited poetic sheets, permitting him to appeal to elite readers who appreciate such distinction(s). Horace played with the dynamics of filing and defiling to counter a profusion of poetasters and reader demands and to tidy up the scruffy reputation of Latin literature. And through exilic *epexergasia*, Ovid repeatedly displayed his *exilis* corpus and its various but always lonely encounters with editing tools, thereby keeping his sad body before the eyes of Roman readers he hoped would intervene to help him. The represented book-roll—whether razored, burned, pumiced, filed, shat upon, or shaggy—is as much a character in the story I have sketched as are those who write on and about them.

Since, as I explained in the introduction, orators usually maintain the fiction that their words burst forth with unpremeditated eloquence rather than glide out with writing-aided polish, my focus on editing necessitated I turn from those rhetorical staples, the orators, and toward a group of unabashedly textual wordsmiths, the poets. The obvious exception amongst my choices seems, of course, to be Isocrates. But, not a public speaker and sneeringly designated by Alcidamas as a poet, Isocrates was a classificatory oddity in his own time. He dangles, as Ekaterina Haskins puts it, “between poetics and rhetoric.”² Due especially to recent books by Yun Lee Too, Takis Poulakos, and Haskins, Isocrates’ place in the rhetorical tradition has been secured, but his choice—and we must recognize it as a choice—to write of his editorial fumbling has not been fully appreciated as an assertive stance on his preference for graphic rhetoric that

² Haskins, *Logos and Power in Isocrates and Aristotle*, 31.

takes itself seriously as such. Nor has this attitude been traced beyond into Rome, where it manifests in poetry.

Because poets are not usually included in the rhetorical tradition, I eased into the Catullus chapter with reference and comparison to Cicero, an infinitely more familiar figure. Admittedly, had I expected to find so much engagement with the editorial *lima* in Cicero, I would have dedicated a corpus care chapter exclusively to him. Because next to nothing has been written about his attitude toward editing—Sean Gurd’s article being the only exception that springs readily to mind³—I underestimated the extent to which Cicero *explicitly* enters the textual side of the debate about how to present oneself in public, though of course he implicitly does so in all of his extant writings. Cicero makes brief appearances in the two subsequent chapters, as well. His views on the wide inclusiveness of *oratio* (speech) seem shared by Horace, and Horace joins Cicero’s only son Marcus in birth year and in having been recruited to fight with Brutus and Cassius against Octavian and Antony while completing advanced studies in philosophy in Athens. Cicero died gruesomely the year Ovid was born, and in addition to the nose-centrism of their family names, they both were exiled for violating Roman laws and/or *mores*. Not just the chronologies of but also the concerns of Catullus, Horace, and Ovid coincide with Cicero’s, chief among them, adapting one’s words to new political modes, models, and moods. Catullus ostentatiously withdraws from politics and gestures rudely to Caesar, Horace wields the *lima* as if an instrument of civic order, and Ovid corrects himself too late.

In an essay in another anthology on the rhetorical tradition, *The Viability of the Rhetorical Tradition*, Robert Gaines proposes we think about the rhetorical tradition not “canonically” but “corporeally,” turning our attention to material matters—be they spatial,

³ Gurd, “Cicero and Editorial Revision”.

architectural, textual—contained within or constituted by the various ancient rhetorical media lucky enough to survive and catch our notice. His proposed “corpus conception”⁴ promotes an understanding of ancient rhetoric as “that body of information that contains all known texts, artifacts, and discourse venues that represent the theory, pedagogy, practice, criticism, and cultural apprehension of rhetoric in the ancient European discourse community.”⁵ Such an approach helps sustain the “viability” of ancient rhetoric by expanding beyond the usual suspects. My attention to the book-roll (the textual corpus) takes Gaines’ corpus conception literally.

Representations of textual corpora are rhetorical representations that act on the sensuality and judgment of readers through the provocative and evaluative language of the body. The template of the body—swollen or emaciated, weak or strong, gangly or graceful—forms and informs rhetorical criticism throughout antiquity, with book-rolls making fully palpable the heft of a speech or a poem and allowing for careful scrutiny of its parts and their arrangement. When Nietzsche called aesthetics “a kind of applied physiology,” he was accounting for his body’s reaction to listening to Wagner, starting with a forced tapping of his foot, “[b]ut does not my stomach protest too? my heart? my circulation? Are not my entrails saddened? Do I not suddenly become hoarse?”⁶ My four writers write of having visceral reactions to textual

⁴ Robert Gaines, “De-Canonizing Ancient Rhetoric,” in *The Viability of the Rhetorical Tradition*, ed. Graff, Walzer, and Atwill (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 67, 68.

⁵ Gaines, “De-Canonizing Ancient Rhetoric,” 65. James Fredal, *Rhetorical Action in Ancient Athens: Persuasive Artistry from Solon to Demosthene* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press, 2006) and Kathleen Lamp, “The *Ara Pacis Augustae*: Visual Rhetoric in Augustus’ Principate,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 39.1 (Winter 2009): 1-24, focus on artifacts and “discourse venues” in Athens and Rome, respectively. Also, as Richard Graff informs me, he and Christopher Johnstone have teamed up to work on an Athens-centric project on discourse venues and the rhetorical challenges and opportunities they posed to those who discoursed from them.

⁶ Nietzsche, “Nietzsche Contra Wagner,” in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1982), 664.

encounters (Isocrates with only his own work) and clutching their editing tools tightly as a result. Isocrates, Catullus, Horace, and Ovid expose their editorial labors for various reasons, but they all stake a claim for the superior staying power of the well-tidied text.

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